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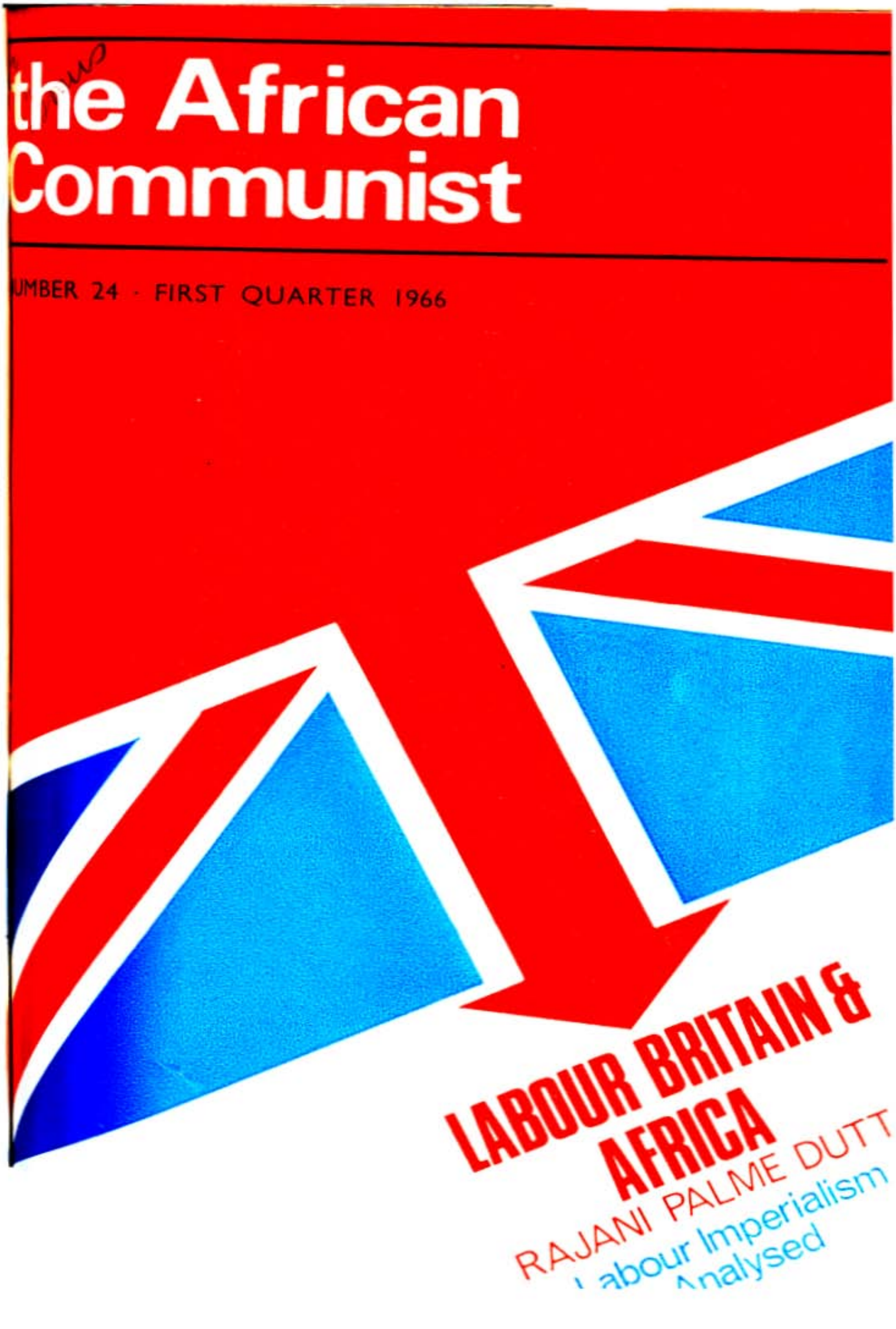

LABOUR BRITAIN & AFRICA

RAJANI PALME DUTT

Labour Imperialism Analysed

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Reflections on Nigeria

THE SUDDEN AND inglorious collapse of what was regarded as a shining model of 'Westminster-type parliamentary democracy' in Africa's most populous independent state must give rise to deep reflection by all concerned with the future of our continent. The taking over of the state apparatus by army officers, following a series of similar events in the Congo, Dahomey, Central African Republic and even revolutionary Algeria, is certain to lead to a spate of speculation by political commentators of all kinds.

Naturally the anti-African racists will be quick to see in these developments a further illustration of their thesis that Africans are not 'ready' for self-government. It would be understandable but regrettable if African patriots would angrily retort by justifying everything that takes place in our continent as beyond criticism.

The 'Westminster' or western-type parliamentary systems imposed by the colonialists have been rejected in almost every African country, within a few years of independence. Those who regard this type of political system as the essence of democracy will be bitterly disappointed.

Others will draw the facile but superficial conclusion that democracy itself is a fallacious conception.

The truth is that it is not 'democracy' but the specific theory and practice of bourgeois democracy as exhibited in Western Europe and North America, in the present period of the profound degeneration and inner crisis of capitalism, which has proved bankrupt. Even in the classical countries where bourgeois democracy developed to its highest level, the two-party or multi-party parliamentary system is at its lowest ebb. In Britain and America the so-called 'free choice' of the voter resolves itself into an option between rival parties (Labour or Conservative; Democrat or Republican) with virtually indistinguishable policies. Whether in home policy (no nationalization, wage-freezes, bigger profits) or foreign and colonial policy (support for America in Vietnam, opposition to national liberation in Rhodesia, Guiana, etc.) the Labour government follows the same line laid down by its Tory predecessor. Johnson is carrying out to the letter the recommendations of his defeated opponent Goldwater. Gaullist France has virtually abandoned parliamentarism for one-man rule. In the recent West German elections the Social Democratic Party advanced the identical policy to that of its bourgeois opponents. In Italy, all the main parties with the exception of the Communists are at one on policy; their differences relate only to which politicians should hold which offices in the Cabinet.

Once major matters of international and home policy are removed from the sphere of controversy, 'politics' becomes a cynical game between rival teams of aspirants to office—and the perquisites and personal opportunities which go with office. They are not seeking power— they recognize that power resides with the great monopolists of national and international finance-capital who can make or break any 'western' government. They are not even seeking administration of the state: administration resides in the hands of the permanent civil service and military bureaucracy, who remain while Ministers and Cabinets come and go. Lack of principle, careerism and opportunism among the political leaders, disillusion and political apathy among the public, which is ever more distantly removed from any genuine opportunity to participate in policy making, a dead outer shell of democratic forms which has all but lost the original conviction and reality which once gave it vitality—this is the pattern of perfect government which the colonialists have had the arrogance to hold up to the peoples of Africa and Asia as best suited to their needs, and indeed as the condition for their being allowed a constitution.

It is hardly surprising that, as soon as they were able, practically all the African and Asian peoples have got rid of this bogus type of 'democratic constitution' as soon as they were able to do so. It is a pattern

specifically designed to create the illusion of government by the people while preventing the people from actually participating in the legislative and administrative processes. It is designed to create artificial divisions, or to preserve old ones, to encourage corruption and opportunism, to permit manipulation on essential policy questions by the all-powerful forces behind the scenes. Little as it is suited to the real needs of the masses in the 'west', it is obviously incompatible with the aspirations of the revolutionary peoples of the former colonies, urgently in need of a major regeneration, a great national effort to transform societies petrified by years of colonialism, to uplift desperately low living standards. Such societies cannot afford or tolerate the nepotism, inefficiency, corruption, fanning of regional and tribal hostilities, domination by foreign and local vested interests, and general degeneration of political ideals, all of which flourish like bluebottles in the Augean stables of the western-patterned institutions which the departing colonialists conferred upon us.

Thus there will be few to mourn the failure of the Nigerian experiment in bourgeois democracy in a country dominated by feudal tyranny and neo-colonialist hirelings. The farcical general elections, followed by the Western Nigerian regional elections, were only the final symptoms of the fatal illness. Characterized by widespread corruption, ballot-rigging, terrorism, and even assassinations, they were a disgrace to Nigeria and to Africa. There was no public confidence in or support for the regime. The Majors and Generals took over this vast country of 55 million souls without resistance, with almost ridiculous ease.

General Ironsi has announced that he and his colleagues are preparing a new constitution. Most Nigerians will doubtless feel that whatever emerges from these deliberations, it can hardly be worse than what went before. Like them, we are prepared to suspend judgment until we see what is proposed, although the first announcement he made, there reassuring foreign capitalists that there would be no nationalization of industry, hardly gives the impression that the Sandhurst-trained Nigerian military men have any deep understanding of political affairs, or are inspired with the patriotic, socialist spirit of the African Revolution. And why should we expect them to be?

Militarism and army dictatorships are no solution to the problems of emerging Africa. It is true that in some cases, notably that of Egypt, military take-overs have eventually led to the establishment of genuinely patriotic and progressive societies, but this was only because in this case the state was transformed, by men who were genuinely concerned with the working people and who increasingly depended upon them, into a more popular and stable form of civilian regime. In the Sudan,

the reverse was the case, and only after much damage had been caused to the people that Aboud's stifling regime was overthrown.

In rejecting the 'western' type of bogus bourgeois democracy as unsuitable for African countries, we must be careful not to throw the baby out with the dirty bath water. The concept of democracy—of government of the people by the people—is profoundly in conformity with the ancient traditions and the present-day needs of Africa. But the practice of genuine, working democracy does not—as the practice of Ghana and Tanzania are increasingly demonstrating—mean weak, inefficient government, fostering of artificial divisions, careerism, and domination by behind-the-scenes moneyed and foreign interests. That such hateful practices are identified in the popular imagination with the idea of 'democracy' is merely a result of the successful trick played on Africans by imperialist propagandists, who have managed to impose their own false image as representatives of the democratic principle. In reality, as all these things are hated by the people, a real *people's government* would make it its main aim to eliminate them. Once we get this false concept out of our minds we will realise that a true democracy is one that is ruthless and dictatorial towards selfish moneyed interests and imperialist agents, while affording the greatest freedom of speech and organization to the people; one which arouses and draws the people into every aspect of the political and economic life of the country; one which expresses the unity of the whole nation in the great patriotic tasks ahead, and rests firmly on the conscious organized support of the working masses.

To achieve such a new democratic solution, a democratic dictatorship of the working people, it is essential that the masses, the working class in firm alliance with the rural people, should be independently organized in their own trade unions, peasant organizations and political movement. It is also essential that a clear vision should exist, based not only on African but also world experience, regarding our way ahead. For while African experience differs in detail from that of other parts of the world, the general rules governing historical development are universal. It is in this respect that we should recall the profound truth of Lenin's statement that no revolution can succeed without a revolutionary theory. Such a theory cannot emerge from the narrow area of military theory; nor can it be evolved from the general ethical principles, however admirable they may be, of religion. The priest and the soldier may have their place, but that place does not consist in the conduct and organization of human society. Nor for that matter can the conduct and direction of society be safely left to the professional politicians and statesmen, however eminent they may be. Democracy really means that the ordinary people must do their own thinking and deciding for

themselves. If they are not to be at the mercy of every demagogue, careerist and would-be Napoleon, our people must master the science of social progress and revolution: Marxism-Leninism.

JOHANNESBURG CELEBRATES THE NEW YEAR

ABOUT HALF A MILLION people live in the segregated complex of African townships south-west of Johannesburg—Soweto. The South African police chose to celebrate the new year in a manner which is symbolic of South Africa, by conducting a vast military-style blitz on these working people. Over 2,500 policemen, mainly whites and of course officered and commanded exclusively by whites, and backed up by the men and armoured cars of the East Rand Commando, descended on Soweto in the early hours of the morning, before most people were up. In three successive nights every household was rudely awakened, entered and searched.

On the first night, over sixteen hundred people were arrested and flung into prison—the police phrase is 'detained for screening'. Over 900 of them were subsequently charged with 'criminal offences'—the great majority under the pass laws. This operation symbolizes not only the callous attitude of the Verwoerd regime towards the African majority in South Africa, but also the permanent martial law and civil-war type of situation of South Africa. No country which observed civil liberties, or where there is not a terrorist dictatorship, would for a moment tolerate such a furious attack on peaceful citizens. Try to think what it means. In London, for example, this would be the equivalent of an attacking force of over 30,000—that is to say, about the strength of three army divisions. The number arrested—if London was subjected to an assault on this scale—would be some 20,000, and the number charged with crimes apprehended in two hours would be over 12,000. That is if one takes the *total* population of Johannesburg in comparison with London. But in fact this punitive raid was not against the *total* Johannesburg population, but against approximately half of it, the African half, confined involuntarily to Soweto. When this is considered, raiding on this scale in London would result in a night's haul of 40,000 arrested, 24,000 charged.

This massive military operation takes place without a whimper from allegedly 'democratic' opinion in South Africa. The best the *Rand Daily Mail* can offer—now that editor Lawrence Gandar has been 'kicked upstairs'—is to ask whether this is the answer to crime. 'Police raids on this scale must never be allowed to become a permanent part of our social policy.' Pious, cool and curiously

unangry. And of course like so much pious South African liberalism —too late.

Raids like this have been a permanent part of South African social policy ever since Africans started asserting themselves and their rights to be treated as human beings. And will remain so; for without such massive intimidation and terrorization apartheid cannot be maintained. In the end there is no just or humanitarian way to maintain white supremacy—as Smith's Rhodesia shows just as clearly as Verwoerd's South Africa. In the end, it can only be maintained by naked terror, because it is minority power held in the teeth of mass opposition, from the majority.

Brigadier Steyn, the policeman in charge of Johannesburg's police, described these particular raids as 'part of my campaign to clean up the city of all criminal elements and "won't works".' The joining of those two categories—criminals and workless—is another typical piece of white South Africanism. An African's duty—in white South African eyes—is to work, where the boss tells him, in the jobs the boss reserves for black men only, at the wages the boss lays down. Anything else is criminal. So the numbers arrested were mainly—if not entirely—a special South African type of criminal—a 'won't work', which means an unemployed man; a 'possessor of dangerous weapons', which means any blade over three inches long, be it hatchet, chopper or carving knife; a 'vagrant', which means a man without a pass properly stamped by the correct authority authorizing him to be in the city at all; or a tax offender, who cannot produce a current receipt for the year's tax.

We will not speak of how the raiding is done. This is old-hat stuff in South Africa, where doors are broken in if not opened quickly enough, men and women roughly thrown out of bed, furniture overthrown or broken. Brigadier Steyn thinks that the debt for this type of thing can be wiped out by a few words of apology. He was sorry, he said, to disturb law-abiding inhabitants. 'But it was necessary for their own good.' One day the people of Soweto will find a way to speak for themselves. And when they do, they will no doubt find a way to throw Brigadier Steyn's words back in his teeth. May we suggest that summary arrest, screening and trial of all criminal elements who ordered and took part in these raids will then be very much in order?

STARVATION AMIDST PLENTY

While the authorities in South Africa were busying themselves with this type of massive exercise—reminiscent of nothing so much as

the 'frightfulness' of the Nazi occupation regimes in Europe in the 'forties—millions of Africans in our country are literally starving to death. Even *The Star* (Johannesburg), owned by the gold-mining monopolies, conceded that 'Thousands of Africans are facing stark famine . . . '

> Pitifully undernourished they are dying from diseases like kwashiorkor and pellagra . . . This is the plight of Africans in the Northern Cape, as well as over the border into Bechuanaland.
> Other stricken areas . . . are the Bantustans of Vendaland and Sekukuniland in the Transvaal, in Basutoland and in the Ciskei.—*The Star*, 29.10.65.

Officially the famine is ascribed to the past four years of drought. Voluntary organizations like Kupugani and the Red Cross and church missions try to provide such charitable relief as they can afford. After consistently decrying the efforts of such organizations as 'unnecessary' and their reports as 'exaggerated', even the government has felt obliged to provide some grudging 'relief'—which is costing the state R3 million, compared to the R230 million a year on military expenditure.

Certainly there have been drought conditions for the past four years. But the fundamental reason for the now-admitted famine in the African rural areas is landlessness. Over 87 per cent of the land has been taken away from the African farmers and the white farmers allow much of it to lie uncultivated while people are starving.

South Africa is superficially a very rich country. Every luxury is enjoyed by the white propertied and middle classes. Even the white workers, mainly employed in supervisory tasks, enjoy living standards well above those of similarly placed workers in western Europe. This wealth is mainly the product of non-white labour. A recent survey shows that in manufacturing industry there are 630,700 non-whites employed as compared with 218,000 whites. In the engineering industry there are 260,000 non-whites, 60,000 whites. Ample funds could easily be made available for great irrigation and other schemes to overcome the chronic shortage of water. But even the much publicized Orange River scheme, designed for the benefit of the white farm-owners, has been put into cold storage: the money is needed for the ever-growing needs of the army and the huge police state apparatus.

This then, is South Africa as she enters 1966: beneath the glitter of wealth and luxury, the gaunt skeleton of starvation, police terror, mass murder. The brave spirits with the courage to resist are flung

into prisons, like Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada and now Bram Fischer.

BRAM FISCHER

The arrest of Bram Fischer by the Security Police last November represents not only a personal tragedy for a great man but a serious setback for the whole liberation movement.

When, in January 1965, Bram Fischer 'jumped' bail while on a charge of belonging to and furthering the aims of the illegal Communist Party, he wrote: 'My decision was made only because I believe it is the duty of every true opponent of the Government to remain in this country and to oppose its monstrous policy of apartheid with every means in its power. That is what I shall do for as long as I can'.

For ten months while he was in hiding he was a symbol of resistance to the evil regime of the Nationalist Party. In the letter he had left after going underground, he had written: 'If, in my fight, I can encourage even some people to think about, to understand and to abandon the policies they now so blindly follow, I shall not regret any punishment I may incur'.

He had in mind particularly his fellow-Afrikaners. To try to avoid the appalling bloodshed and civil war that might overtake the country unless the policy of apartheid was abandoned was, he said, 'a supreme duty, particularly for an Afrikaner, because it is largely the representatives of my fellow-Afrikaners who have been responsible for the worst of these discriminatory laws'.

Though the Bar Council, instigated by toadies who at one time were proud enough to number Bram Fischer amongst their 'friends', immediately took steps which resulted in his being struck off the roll, there is no doubt Bram's action won the deep sympathy of thousands of ordinary white South Africans sick to death of living with the guilt of apartheid on their minds yet afraid to take the practical steps which are necessary to end it. We have received reports of Whites, in no way involved in politics, who wept openly at the news that Bram had been captured. The growing number of Whites who are today moved, as much by the increasing brutality of the Verwoerd regime as by the apparent apathy of the White community as a whole, to make a stand, often a sacrifice, against apartheid, must certainly have been inspired by his example, even if they did not share all his ideals.

As for the non-Whites, no more handsome tribute could be paid than that of the African National Congress, whose journal

Spotlight, in an editorial, stated on November 19th, after learning of his re-arrest:

> It was in (the) revolutionary cause of the oppressed people that Bram Fischer entered and selflessly devoted his life, energy and legal career . . . Bram spared no effort in organising other people to join the struggle for freedom, independence and human dignity in South Africa. His personal integrity has been admitted even by those who sought to disbar him from his profession as an advocate. His brilliant advocacy in defence of such patriots as Mandela and Sisulu will remain a monument of devotion to liberty and brotherhood. This self-effacing, amiable and determined revolutionary has become a legend in his lifetime owing to his loyalty and devotion to the cause of liberation in South Africa.

Many biographical articles and tributes to Bram Fischer have appeared since his arrest. The main details of his life and background are by now well known—his illustrious ancestry, his brilliant career at the bar. But we take pride, especially, in a fact which has been overlooked by many—that until its dissolution in 1950, Bram Fischer was a member of the Communist Party of South Africa, whose theoretical standpoint and practical action formed the framework for his own many-sided work as a lawyer, politician and man.

Those who were his comrades in many a campaign can never forget the contribution which he made—his wisdom, his patience, his willingness to undertake the most humdrum as well as the most important tasks, his steadfastness in a crisis, his unwavering confidence in the future. Bram is not the misguided 'do-gooder' that he had been made out to be in some sections of the press. What he did, he did with a sense of absolute conviction and dedication, believing it was in the best interests of his country and its people. If he has been moved to throw away his career as a result of his political work, it was not because he desired martyrdom, or indeed for any personal reason, but because he took a calculated risk for a plainly political purpose. He found apartheid intolerable, he studied and organized with others the best means of bringing it to an end and substituting for it a society which would abolish discrimination and usher in an era of justice, freedom and equality for all. In Verwoerd's South Africa, such activities are illegal and dangerous. Since 1948, the political climate has become steadily more menacing and hostile for the political reformer. Legal methods of struggle have one by one been outlawed, and laws placed on the statute book providing the most savage penalties for those rash or courageous enough to undertake political work. Bram was anything but rash. That he finds himself in the dock today, threatened with as yet

unspecified charges, possible conviction and years of imprisonment, is a tribute not only to the man who did not flinch from doing his duty, but also to the cause which in the first place attracted a man of his calibre and idealism.

Though arrest and trial have come as no surprise to Bram, they will undoubtedly constitute for him, no longer in the best of health, a grievous strain. Life has already dealt harshly with him—he has lost his dear wife and comrade Molly, his home and career have been broken up, his youngest son Paul lies ill in hospital, he himself, once a successful lawyer, is penniless. Like thousands of others of all races in South Africa, he who has given everything to the cause, now stands in need of every support it can offer him. His trial, just as his whole life, is not a personal matter, but something which must be shared by all his comrades. We have no doubt that Bram will turn the tables on his accusers, and place in the dock the hateful regime which has dared to indict him—a man regarded and described even by his enemies as 'a saint'. He will regard his trial merely as another field of battle where he can still continue the relentless struggle against his adversaries.

Now is the time for the South African liberation movement and its allies in every country to come to the assistance of Bram Fischer and the cause to which he has devoted his life. Every effort must be made to demonstrate the solidarity of the whole civilized world with a man who personifies all that is humane, noble and dignified in human relations as against the beastliness and barbarism of those who rule South Africa today. We can expect the Nationalist regime and its army of paid spies, thugs, informers and prosecutors to heap every possible infamy on the head of this man and his associates in what promises to be a 'show' trial. The prosecution will press for the harshest possible sentence. Only the pressure of public opinion inside and outside South Africa can save Bram Fischer from the worst injury his enemies will try to inflict on him.

THE SUDANESE COMMUNISTS

As now in Nigeria, so four years ago the corruption, disunity and failure to provide for the needs of the masses in the Sudan of the reactionary Parliamentary parties paved the way for the Aboud military dictatorship to seize power. It proved even more incompetent to solve the country's problems, following neo-colonialist policies at home and abroad and stifling the freedom of speech, organization and the press.

After a hard struggle, in which a leading part was played by the urban working class and students of Khartoum and other cities, the Aboud

dictatorship was overthrown. At the head of the revolutionary forces stood the Sudanese Communist Party, which had bravely resisted the dictatorship and defended the people's rights all along.

Naturally the Party gained greatly in popularity because of its heroic stand. Its members were respected everywhere, and its newspaper *Al Maidan* had the third largest circulation of any in the country. This popularity greatly alarmed the reactionary classes and parties, which though they had done nothing to oppose the dictatorship emerged after the fall of Aboud. They therefore began to take serious measures to try to destroy the Communist Party, the trade unions and other revolutionary, anti-imperialist organizations. The Umma Party and the National Unionist Party, which had all along been at loggerheads, joined forces not against imperialism but against the 'communist danger.' They whipped up Moslem fanaticism (making use of a false report that the C.P. was opposed to Islam) and regional prejudice against the Southern tribes. They made much use of the British royal visit immediately after the revolution to rally right-wing forces. They went in for wide-scale rigging of the elections to the Constituent Assembly.

Finally they railroaded a law through the Assembly outlawing the Communist Party and other progressive organizations, and banning *Al Maidan* and other journals.

The Sudanese Communist Party secretary, Comrade Abdul Halek Madjoub, has declared that these measures are unconstitutional and that the Party will defy and resist them. All African democrats and opponents of imperialism and neo-colonialism will stand with him and his comrades in their new round of struggle.

UNITY FOR SOUTH AFRICA

With Sol Dubula's second article in the present issue, we end the re-examination of the present activities of leaders of the Pan-Africanist Congress abroad. This examination was occasioned by the continued virulence of their attacks on all who have fought and continue to fight for freedom in South Africa. Now that the record has been put straight it is hoped that it will not be neccessary again to return to this theme.

At the same time, the problem remains of broadening as much as possible the united front of South African liberation, whose kernel is the African National Congress and its allies, to include all who are ready to fight against apartheid and for a free South Africa. There must surely be a place within the concept of unity for everyone who is genuinely interested in this struggle and not in slanders and recriminations. If, as seems apparent, certain self-appointed PAC representatives are obsessed with their habit of splitting and regurgitating old quarrels, we should not forget either that a number of young African

patriots, new to political activity, were aroused by PAC slogans and sincerely volunteered and made sacrifices for their ideals. They are bound to realize sooner or later that splitters and liars can never lead our people to freedom, and we are sure that the broad liberation movement will always find an honourable place for them.

The broadest unity of the forces fighting apartheid has always been the aim of our liberation movement. Such unity will be hammered out on the anvil of struggle within our country; not in the course of sterile debates with exiled politicians of the type so scathingly exposed by Sol Dubula.

ARTHUR LETELE

We are sad indeed to learn of the passing of Dr. Arthur Letele, former Treasurer-General of the African National Congress of South Africa. A modest man, his quiet manner revealed little of the ardent patriotism and heroism which showed itself in his many years of devotion to the national liberation movement. In the midst of the savage police attack at Kimberley in November 1952, when fourteen Africans were shot dead and thirty-five wounded, Arthur Letele stood amidst the flying bullets, rallying the people and attending to the wounded. He faced the long years of the treason trial, of the 1960 detention, and of his eventual exile to Lesotho, with fortitude. But there can be no doubt that savage police persecution was basically responsible for shortening the life of this fine fighter for freedom.

We express our deepest sympathy to his family and to his colleagues in the African National Congress.

British Labour and Africa

Rajani Palme Dutt

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S ROLE in relation to Africa, especially Rhodesia and South Africa, has brought into the forefront of attention the question of the relations of British Labour and the African liberation movement.

In any discussion of this question it is important to remember that the labour movement in Britain in the broadest sense, the nine million trade unionists, the six million members of the Labour Party, as well as the militant section of the working class represented by the Communist Party and its supporters, active within the trade unions, but excluded from direct participation in the Labour Party. is composed of a great variety of elements and trends. No generalization about the policies of the Labour Government should be regarded as covering the outlook of the working class as a whole or even of the majority of the British labour movement. In many respects the Government's policies in Africa have been as vehemently opposed by numbers of active socialists and members of the Labour Party as by national liberation fighters in Africa. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the African people as a whole it is inevitably the policy and action of the Labour Government which is regarded as the voice and expression of British Labour. And it is this which it is the purpose of the present article to examine.

In a previous article which appeared in THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST of April-June 1963 entitled 'Right Wing Labour and Africa', a careful examination was made of the record of British Labour in relation to Africa up to that date. The correctness of the analysis made in that article has been fully demonstrated by the present experience of the Labour Government.

I: LENIN ON LABOUR IMPERIALISM

Exactly half a century ago Lenin in his famous book on imperialism, published in 1916, as well as in many other studies, especially his *Imperialism and the Split of the Labour Movement,* laid bare the roots of the reactionary degeneration in the upper

leadership of the West European labour movement, and the consequent retarding of the transition to socialism in the advanced industrial countries of Western Europe and North America.

Lenin found the roots of this diseased development in the role of colonialism. He showed how the economy of these countries was more and more built on colonial super-profits. This economic basis affected the whole political structure. The hunt for colonial super-profits, for the domination of the widest territories to exploit, using them as an outlet for the ever-expanding export of capital, as well as a source of raw materials and market for industrial goods, became the driving force of the policies of the great imperialist powers. This was the driving force leading to world war for the re-division of the world. At the same time the flow of colonial super-profits made it possible for the ruling class to buy off the parallel threatening advance of the labour movement by corrupting an upper section of the working class, especially the leadership, with a small share in the spoils.

The truth of Lenin's analysis was abundantly demonstrated by the experience of the first world war. Whereas previously the difference between reformist and revolutionary theories and policies within social democracy and the labour movement had appeared as only a theoretical or tactical difference, now right-wing social democratic leaders, dominating the majority of the labour movement in all the leading imperialist countries except Russia, threw the principles of international socialism overboard and came out into the open as Labour imperialists. Previously the shameless theories of what became known as 'Fabian Imperialism', promulgated in their booklet *Fabianism and the Empire* in 1900, was regarded as an outrage by the entire labour movement and social democracy, including by such opportunist leaders as Ramsay Macdonald who resigned from the Fabian Society in protest. By 1914, however, the dominant right-wing leaders openly aligned themselves with their own imperialist masters in each country against the rival groups of exploiters and called on the workers to slaughter one another in the interests of the ruling class.

During the years between the two world wars the truth of Lenin's analysis was further demonstrated. Already during the war of 1914-18 the first signal example of the role of official Labour as executioner of the colonial freedom struggle and simultaneously of socialism, had received a historic expression when, after the bloody suppression of the Irish Easter uprising, whose 50th anniversary we celebrate in 1966, the Labour Party leader Henderson, as Minister

in the War Cabinet of Lloyd George, authorized the execution of James Connolly, the outstanding pioneer of socialism in Britain and Ireland.

The first Labour Government of Ramsay Macdonald in 1924 conducted a murderous bombing offensive in Iraq, and threw the leaders of the young Communist Party of India into prison through the Cawnpore Trial. It was characteristic of the method adopted to involve left-wing spokesmen in the Labour Party in these proceedings (a technique which is being repeated today) that the left-pacifist William Leach, a retired Bradford worsted manufacturer, as Under-Secretary for Air (the Air Minister General Thomson was in the House of Lords) had to answer with embarrassed incoherence in the House of Commons, to defend the bombing of Iraqi villagers for the crime of non-payment of taxes.

The second Labour Government of Ramsay Macdonald went even further and threw 60,000 Indians into prison for the crime of demanding national independence, as well as conducting the famous Meerut Trial against the communist and trade union leaders of the Indian working class. It was under the second Labour Government that brutal attack against African strikers, with firing by armed police and numbers killed or wounded, took place in various African colonies, as in Gambia in 1929 and the Gold Coast in 1930. These preliminary experiences of the role of Labour imperialism are important when we come to consider the present stage of its governmental role in the conditions of today.

2: IS LENIN'S ANALYSIS OUT OF DATE TODAY?

Today we have entered into a new period in the record of colonialism and the national liberation movement.

The old colonialism of direct rule of colonial territories is approaching its end, even though very obstinate rearguard actions are still being fought in the remaining territories, especially in the southern region of the African continent. As President Nkrumah has shown in his important new book on *Neo-Colonialism*: 'Existing colonies may linger on, but no new colonies will be created.' But, as he goes on to point out: 'In place of colonialism as the main instrument of imperialism we have today neo-colonialism.' With abundant illustration he shows how, within the framework of newly independent states, the methods of neo-colonialism, which he describes as 'the worst form of imperialism', have intensified actual colonial exploitation.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the terms of trade. The *Financial Times* on July 19th, 1965, that is, during the period of the present Labour Government, noted the increasing 'bonus' which the imperialist countries are drawing from primary producing countries.

> The broad position is that since 1957 alone—and the primary producing countries as a whole were losing ground on the terms of trade front for several years before that—the industrialized countries have derived a saving of the order of $7,000m. per annum from the decline in their import prices. The rise in their export prices has added some $3,000m. to $4,000m. to their own foreign exchange earnings over the same period. So they can be said to have enjoyed a bonus of some $10,000m. to $11,000m. per annum at the expense of the rest of the world—a bonus they have done nothing to earn.
>
> Since the under-developed countries are almost all primary producers, this process has not merely tended to cancel out the increased foreign aid the industrialized countries have made available for helping them forward in recent years. It must have largely cancelled out all such aid. For taking official bilateral assistance, aid provided multilaterally through international organizations and private investment together, the total flow of assistance to the less developed regions from the West is still not much in excess of $10,000m. per annum, if as much.

Thus the supposed 'new' 'philanthropic' policies of 'aid' and 'development' have covered a reality of increasing colonial exploitation.

The colonial super-profits are still drawn in abundance by the imperialist countries, not only from the remaining colonies, but also from the newly independent countries so long as these are not yet strong enough to defeat the strategy of neo-colonialism.

Hence the basis for corruption of the upper stratum and leadership of the labour movement in the imperialist countries, that is, for Labour imperialism, continues also today in the period of the disintegration of the old colonialism and the advance of national liberation. Blindness to this reality of the modern world was typically expressed in John Strachey's book *The End of Imperialism*, published in 1959, when he claimed that Lenin's teachings had been disproved because after the dissolution of the Empire Britain had continued prosperous and able to maintain the structure of social reforms. He had not understood that through neo-colonialism the economic-political structure of Britain today still continues to confirm Lenin's thesis.

The understanding of this continuance of the reality of colonial exploitation, and consequently of the basis for Labour imperialism, is of vital importance for the present period and for the question

of the policy of the present Labour Government in relation to Africa. This analysis is the more necessary today, because the disintegration of the old colonialism and the advance of national liberation since 1945 gave for a while the opportunity for the Labour imperialists to endeavour to put on a new face. Their current line became to disclaim and deplore the 'old imperialism', and to proclaim themselves the true friends of the colonial and newly independent peoples. On this basis Lenin's analysis is today declared to be out of date.

This is an old familiar gambit. With each new development of capitalism and imperialism the teachings of Marx and Lenin are always declared to be proved obsolete and no longer operative. Yet in fact the general principles continue to operate so long as the basic economic system of class division, class exploitation and colonial exploitation continues. It is only the forms which change and require to be analysed afresh in each new concrete situation.

The third Labour Government of Attlee and Bevin, during the year 1945-51, had held office during the period of the rapid change of the entire world situation since the second world war, finding expression in the extension of the socialist world, the break-up of the colonial system and the victories of national liberation with the establishment of an extending series of newly independent states. In this situation the third Labour Government sought to describe the advance from colonialism as a special achievement of the Labour Government and a gift of freedom conferred by it on the formerly oppressed colonial peoples. On this basis the modern Labour Party leadership, successors of those who used to boast 'we love our Empire' in the words of J. H. Thomas, or speak with Herbert Morrison of 'the jolly old Empire', now endeavour to present the Labour Party as the true friend and champion of anti-imperialism and of the newly independent nations.

The alleged foundation of this claim is false.

Historically it was the victory of the peoples over Fascism, and in the first place the decisive role of the Soviet Union in that victory, and the advance of the socialist camp to embrace over one-third of the world's population, which profoundly weakened imperialism and made possible the triumphs of the national liberation movement in compelling imperialism to retreat and winning the establishment of an extending series of new independent states. In this world advance the defeat of Toryism and the return of a Labour parliamentary majority by the British electorate in 1945

was one significant expression, but not the cause or main initiating factor of the popular advance taking place over the world.

In reality the Attlee-Bevin Government, at the same time as yielding to the advance of national liberation where the available forces of imperialism were insufficient to defeat it, as in the case of India, continued the method of colonial wars of repression elsewhere, as in the simultaneous long-drawn war against the Malayan liberation movement. This parallelism of two concurrent lines or seeming contradiction is the characteristic picture of the strategy of modern imperialism. The picture of the official Labour Party policy and leadership as the champion of anti-colonial liberation is based above all on the picture of the 'gift' of freedom to India. This picture ignores the historical reality of the previous Labour Government's endeavour to crush the Indian national movement with the imprisonment of 60,000 of its fighters, or the no less revealing fact that the Labour Party election manifesto of 1945 contained no mention of any intention to establish the independence of India. In other words, the recognition of Indian independence was compelled, as all expert testimony has since admitted, when the revolt of the Indian armed forces alongside the popular upsurge reached a point which made it impossible for the imperialists to mobilize sufficient forces to crush a revolt of 400 million. But the consequent recognition of independence was accompanied with the disastrous parting gift of partition, the full legacy of which still makes itself felt today in the current war of India and Pakistan.

On the other hand, when it was a question of the six million of Malaya, against whom overwhelming forces could be concentrated, the most brutal colonial war was conducted. It is in accordance with this understanding of the real balance of forces that in the case of Africa this third Labour Government did not give independence to a single African nation, but followed the familiar method of combining repression of the national movement with constitutional concessions to win over a section of the leadership to collaborate with imperialism.

The full record of the third Labour Government of 1945-51 in relation to Africa has been traced in the article already referred to in the article in THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST, April-June 1963.

It is characteristic of the contrast between this mythical picture and the real character of the role of the third Labour Government in relation to Africa and the colonial sphere that during the subsequent Tory Government the late Aneurin Bevan, in a debate

in Parliament roundly attacking the Tories and describing how they had been compelled to give way to the national liberation movement only after first seeking to suppress it and imprisoning its leaders, cited Kenya and Kenyatta, Cyprus and Archbishop Makarios, and went on to instance Kwame Nkrumah and Ghana as a similar example, when he was interrupted and cut short by a reminder that it was the Labour Government which had imprisoned Nkrumah and the subsequent Tory Government which had released him and recognized the independence of Ghana.

Nevertheless, during the succeeding 13 years of Tory rule, although in practice imperialist policy pursued was bi-partisan, this propaganda picture was assiduously presented of the official Labour Party leadership and policy as the enlightened champion of the aspirations of the colonial and newly independent peoples, and as pledged to the ending of every form of imperialism and imperialist exploitation, and to the promotion of the interests of the newly independent nations by an increase of aid and development to constitute a higher proportion of the national income.

The experience now of the first year of the fourth Labour Government has since 1964 brought these claims to the test of practice.

3: THE RECORD OF THE WILSON LABOUR GOVERNMENT

This preliminary survey of the preceding record of British Labour in relation to Africa and the colonial liberation movement is important for estimating correctly the policies pursued by the present Labour Government.

There is no doubt that the defeat of Toryism after 13 years of rule and three previous successful elections in a row, and the return of a Labour parliamentary majority, even though narrow, represented a significant movement of public opinion and aroused wide expectations of favourable changes of policy in Britain.

These expectations were not just confined to wide sections of the labour movement in Britain, but also affected opinion among a proportion of the leadership and membership of the national liberation movement. Their leaders had had close personal contact with the leaders of the Labour Party, and had received many assurances of future co-operation in policy. Labour had officially denounced the Commonwealth Immigration Act of the Tory Government as a surrender to racialism. Labour had given an official pledge to stop the sale of arms to South Africa. Labour had officially denounced the Constitution devised for British Guiana as

a fiddle designed to remove from office the popular national leader Cheddi Jagan. Labour had officially called for an increase in the proportion of the national income to be devoted to aid and development. Prominent Left spokesmen of the Labour Party, like Anthony Greenwood and Barbara Castle, had been actively associated with popular anti-imperialist movements such as the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Movement for Colonial Freedom. Harold Wilson had been elected Leader of the Labour Party by the support of the Left and Centre against George Brown who received the support of the right wing.

However, the editorial of THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST of October-December 1964 wisely warned:

> Now it is in office, it is the Labour Party's own deeds rather than its words which will count. And the acid test of Labour's integrity and sincerity will be its African policy.

The outcome was to prove the justice of this warning.

At the very outset the technique employed by Premier Wilson in the composition of the Government was significant. Precisely the left spokesmen who had been most vocal in criticism of imperialism and most actively associated with anti-imperialist movements, were given positions in the imperialist machine such as would not only gag them from expressing anti-imperialist sentiments but compel them to undertake the official duty of defending imperialist policies in the colonial sphere. Thus Anthony Greenwood was made Minister for the Colonies, and Barbara Castle was given charge of Overseas Development. This meant that Anthony Greenwood as Minister for the Colonies had the task of conducting a colonial war in Southern Arabia in defiance of the expressed resolution of the United Nations Assembly which demanded by a vote of 90—11 that Britain end its repression and withdraw from Aden. Similarly he had the task of maintaining the Constitution and elections in British Guiana which Labour had officially denounced, and putting forward an Order-in-Council to remove Premier Jagan from office. In the same way Barbara Castle had the task, whatever her subjective wishes, to present proposals not for increasing the finance available for aid and development, but for an actual decrease in the financial allocation proposed.

This was in fact a familiar technique copied from previous Labour Governments. In the same way, as we have already seen, Macdonald had made the Left pacifist Leach Under-Secretary of

Air to defend the bombing in Iraq. Attlee had made John Strachey Minister of War to defend the war in Malaya.

The technique is important, not so much for the fate of the individuals concerned, as for the strategy of simultaneously gagging and disorganizing the left wing in the labour movement in order to prevent an effective anti-colonial fight against the Government's policy.

The expectations aroused in some sections by these appointments to key positions in the imperialist machine of Ministers who had been previously prominent as spokesmen of left-wing anti-imperialist opinion only proved a failure to understand the normal working of the political system of British imperialism.

Policy in any special department, such as Overseas Aid, especially a department which is regarded as concerned with welfare and therefore of secondary importance, is determined not by the subjective wishes of the Minister placed in charge but by the policy of the Government as a whole. The policy of the Government as a whole, in the case of a Tory Government, or a right-wing Labour Government, is determined by the general interests of British imperialism. From the outset the strategy of the Wilson Labour Government was geared to the most zealous upholding of the interests of British imperialism; the military alliance with the United States; the continuance of the commitments of NATO, SEATO and the cold war; the maintenance of Britain's military world power, and especially the most loudly proclaimed strategy of maintaining Britain's military strength 'East of Suez', that is, in the Middle Eastern Gulf area and in South-East Asia, with the continued maintenance of the bases of Aden and Singapore. From this point of view East Africa is also seen as of key strategic importance in relation to the Indian Ocean.

4: WHAT HAPPENED TO 'AID' AND 'DEVELOPMENT'

This strategy inevitably involved crippling burdens on Britain's economy, heavy overseas military expenditure, a chronic threat to the balance of payments, and the consequent necessity to impose cuts and increased taxation at home, to intensify colonial exploitation, and to limit any non-military overseas expenditure for 'aid' and 'development'. The Ministers in charge of specific departments could only act in accordance with the requirements of this general policy.

The demand of the Labour movement had been for the reduction of military expenditure and the increase of economic aid for the developing countries.

The practice of the Wilson Labour Government has been an increase of military expenditure and the reduction of overseas economic aid.

The 1965 Budget saw the increase of arms expenditure by £121 million and the reduction of development grants and loans by £8½ million. The total allocation for 'overseas economic aid' in 1965-6 is £103.8 million or a reduction of £9.2 million on the previous year's total of £113 million. Interest rates on loans were increased from 5 per cent to 6¾ per cent.

It is true that in June 1965, when the Government was faced with a difficult situation in the Commonwealth Premiers Conference, Barbara Castle announced in Parliament on June 21st a new plan for 'interest-free loans' to 'selected' Commonwealth countries. The dangling of the carrot in the hope of securing subservience from the dissenting representatives at the Commonwealth Premiers Conference was obvious to all. The Commonwealth Conference took place from June 17th to June 26th. The offer of interest-free loans to 'selected' Commonwealth countries was made on June 21st at the most critical point of the negotiations. The fact that it was a carrot which was being dangled, and not a real increase of aid, was shown by the terms of Barbara Castle's statement:

> We naturally cannot afford to extend these very liberal terms to all developing countries. Since interest-free loans will take the place of loans which would otherwise have been made under the waiver arrangements, *there will not be any additional burden on Britain's balance of payments during the first few years of the loans.* (italics added)

In place of the Labour Party's proclaimed aim of allocating 1 per cent of the national income for overseas economic aid to developing countries, the White Paper on Overseas Aid published in August 1965, after adding in every form of Government sponsored export of capital to make a gross total of £189,600,000 'overseas aid' for 1964-5 admitted that this represented two-thirds of 1 per cent of the gross national product.

5: ARMS AND SOUTH AFRICA

Nowhere was the real character of the imperialist policy more significantly demonstrated than in relation to Africa. Outstanding in this respect were the key tests of South Africa, including the Protectorates, and Rhodesia.

In South Africa the widely publicized announcement of a ban

on the export of arms from Britain to South Africa was soon revealed in practice to be full of loopholes. Exception was specifically made at the time of the announcement for the fulfilment of the contract for 16 Buccaneer military aircraft. But in fact the exceptions were far wider. The Annual Report of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in October 1965 noted that the ban:

> explicitly excluded the supply of arms under 'existing contracts' and, as we now know, under the various secret provisions of the Simonstown military agreement between the two countries. As a result of these exclusions a substantial volume of arms shipments have been made to South Africa in the past year . . . South African military personnel are still being trained in Britain and nothing has been done to discourage the growing flow of British capital and technical know-how and British skilled manpower to South Africa for the development of its armaments and aircraft industry. Top British military and airforce personnel visited South Africa as part of a 'normal' Imperial Defence College course, while Britain trains South African nuclear scientists in her nuclear establishments.

The Report concluded that the net result 'not only made nonsense of the British embargo, but actually undermined the embargoes being pursued by other countries'. The Report further showed how in a variety of fields there has been 'a step-by-step retreat of the Labour Government' from the earlier commitment of the Party to complete opposition to apartheid.

6: THE ACID TEST OF RHODESIA

The crucial battle over the Labour Government's policy in Africa is now centred on Rhodesia.

The racialist coup of the white supremacists on November 11th, 1965, to proclaim illegally and unilaterally the independent sovereignty of their already existing *de facto* white racialist dictatorship, was not a bolt from the blue. It had been publicly announced and prepared for long beforehand.

The Labour Government had received warnings from every side on the urgent need to take quick and decisive action to forestall the coup and end the white racialist dictatorship by suspending the constitution, releasing the African national leaders and convening a constitutional conference for the establishment of democratic independence on the basis of adult suffrage. In the United Nations the issue had been repeatedly raised. Already in 1963 Britain had exercised the veto on this issue in the Security Council. In 1964 the United Nations delegation to London from the Colonialism Committee had condemned the then Tory Government for its

condonation of the racialist dictatorship in Rhodesia, while simultaneously laying down that Britain held sole responsibility for Rhodesia as a supposed domestic affair. The African Governments had made ceaseless representations. The Commonwealth Premiers Conference in June 1965 came close to breakdown on Rhodesia; and a single communiqué was achieved only on the basis of recording separately that the 'responsibility' lay with Britain, but that 'the British Prime Minister was urged by other Prime Ministers' to take action 'within three months'. In October the Conference of the Organization of African Unity at Accra adopted the unanimous resolution of the leaders of the 28 African States represented, calling on Britain to use force if necessary. On November 5th the United Nations Assembly adopted by 82 votes to 9 a resolution calling on Britain to 'take all necessary measures, including military force' to bring about immediately in Rhodesia the suspension of the constitution, the release of political prisoners, and the convening of a constitutional conference, based on adult suffrage, with a view to fixing the earliest possible date for independence. This was within six days of the *coup*.

Nevertheless, the Labour Government refused to act in time. Instead, the Government conducted a charade of endlessly protracted and meaningless negotiations with the leaders of the white racialist government, based on a supporting vote of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the Rhodesian population, while the leaders of the African 95 per cent remained in detention without protest from Britain. Worse. The Labour Government guaranteed in advance not to use force against the racialist dictatorship. The Commonwealth Secretary, Bottomley, after his ten-day visit to Rhodesia in February 1965, stated in parliament on March 8th, 1965, that 'there will be no attempt by the present British Government to use military means to force through constitutional changes and bring about African majority rule'. This was the green light for Smith to go ahead. On November 1st Premier Wilson went further. He stated that the British Government would use force only against 'subversion' in Rhodesia, whether from 'African or European extremists'. Since the 'European extremists' were already maintaining a dictatorship, and a dictatorship does not need to conduct subversion against itself, this meant that the British Government had announced in advance that it would use force only against the Africans, in the event of these struggling to overthrow the dictatorship. This gave the final guarantee for Smith. On November 5th he proclaimed his

State of Emergency. On November 11th he carried through his *coup*.

Subsequently the attempt has been made by apologists of official Labour policy to excuse the protracted negotiations, which so obviously played into the hands of Smith, on the grounds that they succeeded in delaying U.D.I. and therefore gained time. This plea is as false as the similarly notorious plea of Neveille Chamberlain and the defenders of Munich that Munich, however disastrous in the outcome, bought time for Britain. Of course the opposite was the case. The advantage went to Hitler. So here the advantage went to Smith. The protracted negotiations and procrastination of the British Government gave Smith time to complete his preparatory measures and mobilize his forces for his *coup*. Indeed, already in a speech on August 27th, 1965, Smith was boasting of the success of his technique in outmanoeuvring the Labour Government. He referred to the 'incredible remarks' made by Bottomley that 'Britain had averted a unilateral declaration of independence by Rhodesia last October'. On this Smith commented:

> I can only say that if the British Government seriously believed we were on the edge of taking independence last October I am agreeably surprised at how effective our technique at bluffing the rest of the world has been. We knew at that time we were not ready.

What of the action of the British Labour Government after the *coup*?

The coup of November 11th was an open challenge to Britain, to all the peoples of Africa and to the whole world. But the response of the Labour Government showed the same refusal to take decisive action. On the one hand, the Smith Government was formally declared to be deposed and illegal, and guilty of 'rebellion' and 'treason'. Strong words. But no action followed to arrest or remove them. The formal proclamation of the Governor deposing the Smith Government was never even published or reported in Rhodesia. Thus a 'Governor' remained who could not govern or even communicate with the citizens of Rhodesia; while a supposedly non-existent government which was declared to have been deposed continued to govern. A situation appropriate for comic opera, but not for a serious struggle for African freedom. The citizens of Rhodesia were called on to refuse to obey the illegal government; but no alternative government was offered them to follow. When the African leaders set up an alternative government (unfortunately at the outset, two—a situation at the

time of writing still requiring to be sorted out), the British Government refused recognition.

Similarly in relation to the economic sanctions imposed the same half-hearted approach was revealed.

> The British Government has not taken the three steps which might have produced immediate and drastic results. It has not completely frozen Rhodesia's London balances, nor interfered with the supply of oil, nor imposed a general ban on exports (*Financial Times* 13.11.65).

It was understood that the Government was holding oil sanctions in reserve as a card to play in order to counter any demand in the United Nations for more positive action. In other words, the first consideration was not how to defeat the racialist dictators in Rhodesia, but how to defeat the African and socialist majority in the United Nations. This was most glaringly revealed when Wilson in his speech to Parliament on November 12th, immediately following the *coup*, painted before his hearers in vivid terms the horrors, not of the sufferings of the millions of Africans under the heel of a racialist dictatorship, but of a hypothetical entry of 'the Red Army' into Africa.

This experience of Rhodesia has dealt a powerful blow to the illusions of those sections who may have looked to the leaders of Labour imperialism as a supposed ally in the struggle for African freedom. Thereby has been proved the truth that the battle for African freedom can only be fought by the African peoples themselves, with the support of all the progressive forces of the world, the socialist nations, all the newly independent states, and the genuinely anti-imperialist sections in the imperialist countries, including in the British labour movement.

7: THE BATTLE FOR AFRICAN FREEDOM AND THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT

This battle of the African peoples and world democratic forces against imperialism and the reactionary policies of the British Labour Government, now so sharply demonstrated in relation to Rhodesia and South Africa, is not without its expression also in Britain.

Lenin, in his analysis of the corrupting influence of imperialism in the Western labour movement, always distinguished between the upper strata and leadership of the labour movement, who were thus corrupted, and the masses. He never included in this analysis of imperialist corruption the Western working class as a whole. Against the opportunist and reactionary trends of the Labour

imperialists, supported by backward and short-sighted sections of the working class, the most tenacious fight has been consistently conducted by the socialist workers, with the Marxists, today the Communists, in the first place, to awaken the workers politically and win them for joint action in the common anti-imperialist struggle on the basis of the understanding that the alliance with the liberation struggle of the peoples oppressed and exploited by imperialism is not only an elementary duty of international solidarity, but the indispensable condition for the future victory and liberation of the British working class.

Today, in face of the reactionary imperialist policies of the Wilson Labour Government, shown equally in the 'East of Suez' strategy and over South Africa and Rhodesia, the opposition of wide sections of labour and democratic opinion has found expression. Resolutions, meetings, demonstrations and marches have expressed this protest. While the Labour Government has continued to leave the leaders of ZAPU to remain in detention, the mass demonstration organized on November 7th by the British Communist Party in honour of the October Revolution received with thunderous applause the address of the London representative of ZAPU, Nelson Samkange; and when John Gollan, General Secretary of the British Communist Party, and Samkange, representing ZAPU, publicly embraced on the platform, this gesture won an ovation from the audience. The 29th National Congress of the Communist Party is due to receive the greetings of fraternal delegates from ZAPU and from the South African National Congress. These are visible expressions of the alliance in the common struggle. The broadest expression of this alliance is manifested in the Anti-Apartheid Movement, with the participation of many leaders of trade unions and M.P.s, as well as in a host of other forms.

The battle of the African peoples for the completion of African liberation, which is reaching such a height in Rhodesia and South Africa, needs to be the active concern of all socialist and working-class fighters in Britain. This is the true role of the British Labour movement. The recent phase of surrenders to the racialists and colonialists by the dominant right-wing leadership of the Wilson Labour Government represents a temporary though shameful phase in the history of British Labour, and will finally be defeated by the joint victory of the African people, the socialist peoples and also the progressive working class and democratic forces in Britain advancing alongside to the liberation also of Britain from the yoke of imperialism.

November 18th, 1965.

Wreckers of the Fight against Apartheid : II

Putting the Record Straight

Sol Dubula

> This is truth, undeniable truth. Yet it might be expedient in certain circumstances to deny truth.
>
> Matthew Nkoana in *The New African,* October 1965.

> Have the Africanists anything to offer besides cheap and vulgar abuse of the Congress leaders? Yes, they have lies. Big lies and little lies, lies of a truly breathtaking audacity. They seem to have studied Hitler's dictum that no matter how far-fetched the lie you tell—the bigger, he said, the better—if only you repeat it loud enough and often enough people will begin to accept it for the truth.
>
> *Fighting Talk,* August 1958.

When Dan Tloome, the well known ANC leader, wrote the latter remarks he had before him the June-July 1958 issue of *The Africanist* which purported to put forward the views of the sect which subsequently formed the PAC. The issue in question, like all their subsequent propaganda, was devoted almost entirely to an attack—not on white supremacy, but on the leadership of the African National Congress. These leaders were described in the following terms:

> Lackeys of foreign ideologicities [*sic*] . . . discreated [*sic*] . . . purblind. Stooges . . . faithful servants of white domination . . . robots and megaphones. A careerist clique . . . hirelings . . . cranks and touts of white liberals.

It must be remembered that those who were described in the above terms were actually at the time still facing the most serious charges of treason (a capital offence). Today many of them are serving terms of up to life imprisonment on Robben Island. Some have been hanged by the white state. On the other hand those who spat this venom against the people's leaders were doing so from the safety of their arm chairs—having just been expelled from the ANC for scabbing activities in the 1958 General Strike. For this treachery

they earned the accolade from the white press as 'the most responsible native leaders'.

The character and content of *The Africanist* was destined to set the tone for future PAC propaganda techniques against the ANC and its leaders. As time has passed the big lies and little lies and the lies of a truly breathtaking audacity have continued to drip in profusion from the pens of the PAC propagandists. With almost religious ferocity, what remains of the PAC leadership* is devoting more and more of its resources in frantic, futile and fruitless attempts to discredit and destroy the principal, most militant and most revolutionary opponents of white supremacy.

The ANC has, quite rightly, refused to be drawn into this sort of intellectual street brawl—to which level PAC's shebeen politicians would reduce those issues which are a matter of life and death for our people. For this reason it has, by and large, ignored the river of slander, lies and half truths which those who still retain office in the PAC have published. In the main this approach has much to commend it. However, the volume of misrepresentation has so increased lately that those readers of THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST who have not had access to the recent material, and who in particular may not be familiar with the PAC technique, should be brought up to date.

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* Apart from Z. Motopheng and Sobukwe who was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment in 1960 and who is being kept interned on Robben Island, every other top leader of the PAC fled the country years ago. Outside, the dog-fights at the top, the never ending expulsions (usually in the form of a Vorster typ e edict prefaced by the words 'By virtue of the Presidential powers vested in me . . . ' and signed by Leballo) and the spate of allegation and counter-allegation of the misuse of funds, has almost completely destroyed whatever superficial cohesion there once existed. Amongst those dealt with are:

Philip *Kgosane* (led the Cape Town March in 1960). Expelled.

Gaur *Radebe* (PAC representative in Tanganyika). Arrested by Tanganyikan security police during foreign-inspired mutiny.

J. D. *Nyaose* (leading PAC trade unionist). Expelled. Recently issued circular alleging mismanagement of PAC by Leballo.

Joe *Molefe*. Involved in a knife fight with another top PAC leader (Z. B. Molete). Expelled.

Nana *Mahomo* (London PAC representative for many years). Resigned from PAC and now joint editor with Joe Molefe of the London journal *Crisis and Change*.

Peter *Molotsi* (one-time PAC representative in Dar es Salaam). Expelled.

Andrew *Tsehlana* (Transvaal PAC leader and its one-time representative in Zambia). Expelled.

In addition 22 rank-and-file critics of the PAC have recently been expelled in Tanzania. This does not include the 13 whose disgust with PAC's policy led them to resign in 1963 and to join the ANC. Some doubt

Also, one hopes that this brief treatment (see also the last issue) will cause those who have allowed themselves to be influenced by PAC propaganda techniques to rethink their position. I refer not to those who form the backbone of the struggle against white supremacy both inside and outside South Africa—these have seen and experienced enough of the political treachery and dishonesty of most of the higher echelons of the PAC to require no reminders whatsoever. I refer, primarily, to people like Douglas Rodgers, the editor of the British publication *Africa and the World* who, with no first-hand knowledge of the events of the past decade in South Africa has not only provided the PAC clique with a monthly platform but has also himself taken sides (see *Africa and the World*, July 1965). I refer, too, to those responsible for the contents of the *Afro-Asian Journalist*—published in Indonesia—who have allowed political hitch-hikers like Lionel Morrison to write and publish 'facts' about the South African struggle which he knows to be false.

It would require much more space than this whole question merits for me to attempt to analyse each and every distortion and misstatement which has emanated from the PAC publicists. A few random samples will suffice to convince those whose minds are open to being convinced by truth. Take, for example, the following statement by Mr. Nkoana published in the April 1965 issue of *Africa and the World* and republished in the July-October issue of the *Afro-Asian Journalist*:

> I had been brought out of goal by the party who paid the balance of my fine six months ahead of the conclusion of an 18 months' imprisonment term for the purpose of founding and editing a PAC-supporting journal *Mafube* (translated, *Dawn of Freedom*). The first issue was devoted almost entirely to our strongly critical attitude to the demonstration (general strike) which we considered to be a dangerous reversion to directionless unpurposive pre-1960 activities. There was to be no second issue of *Mafube*, for the police pounced. *An interesting sideline to this whole affair is that while the organizers of the demonstration who were arrested at the time were sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment, the editor of a 'subversive' journal which was critical of the demonstration was sentenced to 3 years.* [Italics in the original].
> The story does not end there. The conviction and sentence imposed by a lower court on Duma Nokwe, Secretary General of the African

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also exists as to the current status of Patrick Duncan who, I understand, has recently been removed as PAC's Algerian representative. It is also not clear whether Vuyisile Make, their Cairo representative for many years, has received the presidential edict. He is certainly no longer their Cairo representative.

National Congress, and 13 others were set aside on appeal to a higher court. My own appeal failed.
In the meanwhile the N.E.C. of the PAC had decided that my services would be more useful outside the country than inside gaol. I jumped bail and left South Africa by an underground route.

Trading on the readers' ignorance of the true facts does not always pay. Mr. Nkoana is better advised to restrict himself to generalized insult and broad invective. It is very unwise for him to allow his imagination to actually enter the field of concrete fact. The above events to which he refers are not so far back in history. They can be tested and verified. And what are the facts?

Nkoana is perfectly well aware that he was not charged and convicted as editor of *Mafube*—or for being 'critical' of the general strike (a polite term for scabbing on it). The issue in his case was quite different. Had the issue been the contents of the one and only issue of *Mafube* appealing to African workers to ignore the call to the general strike, he would have received a compliment and not a sentence from the magistrate. In fact, as reported at the time and never denied by them, PAC agents were accorded police assistance and protection in distributing their scabbing *Mafube* broadsheet. Nkoana's account is extremely misleading, to say the least.

Even more misleading is the statement that in contrast, Nokwe and 13 others—'the organizers of the strike'—were sentenced to only 12 months' imprisonment. He wants the reader to draw the inference 'as an interesting sidelight to the whole affair' that either Nokwe and his 13 co-accused were in collusion with the oppressors' courts ('the story does not end there'. Nokwe won his appeal. Nkoana's failed) or that his own activities (in scabbing on a general strike against white supremacy) were considered more dangerous. The facts are, that Nokwe's sentence of 12 months' imprisonment was *not* a charge of organizing the strike but was based on his association with the conference of African leaders held in Orlando at a time when both the ANC and PAC were banned. Indeed PAC took part in this conference. *Mr. Nkoana should remember that amongst Nokwe's* 13 *co-accused whose 'sinister' sentence of* 12 *months was successfully appealed against on a point of law, were included top* PAC *leaders like Joseph Molefe. He should know, too, that* ANC *leaders like Mandela and Sisulu who were later actually charged with organizing the strike, were sentenced to* 5 *years and* 6 *years respectively.*

If one charitably assumes that Mr. Nkoana's memory failed him on these historical questions of fact, he is obviously totally

incompetent to write on such matters. The only other assumption is that he does remember and he is deliberately lying.

It is in any case too silly for words to attempt to base any sort of argument on the question of which leader got what sentence in which case.* But if ideological bankruptcy leads you to look for this sort of *non sequitur*, at least base it on truth and not on deliberate concoction.

As he insists on dragging his own history into his polemic, I must also add that Mr. Nkoana is less than frank when he describes the reasons for his fleeing the country. The bail he 'jumped' was not only in respect of a political conviction.

THE WOMEN'S STRUGGLES

Let us examine another example of PAC's polemical technique.

Writing in the March issue of *Africa and the World* the same gentleman uses the same technique. Speaking of the '50s he says:

> If it was a decade of decision for men it was a time of triumph for our women. 'I challenge our men to give us their trousers' jibed Lilian Ngoyi, President of the ANC Women's League, who was soon to feature in the marathon treason trial.
> 'Mr. President,' said Mrs. Hlongwane addressing Sobukwe at the end of the National Heroes' day speech, 'if when the call comes my man fails you, I swear on my honour he will be finished with me. I will not have another woman in the house.' Her man did not fail Sobukwe.
> Our women were every bit qualified to speak as they did. For this as I have said was their decade. It was a decade in which 20,000 of them from far-flung parts of the country converged on the citadel of apartheid, Pretoria, to confront the Lion of the North Prime Minister Strydom in his den and tell him 'We shall not carry passes'.

Then after detailing the extent and the heroic character of these demonstrations which took place over a period of three years from 1955 onwards, Nkoana goes on:

> By comparison only 8,000 men participated in the defiance of unjust laws campaign *organised by the* ANC in 1952 which lasted about 5 months before it fizzled out.

One hardly knows where to begin disentangling this tissue of misrepresentation of historical facts, of suppression of truth and suggestion of falsity. Undoubtedly the average reader in England (where this journal is published) would gain the following impressions from the above rigmarole:

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* e.g. would Mr. Nkoana like me to add 'as an interesting sidelight' that Sobukwe was sentenced to three years and Sisulu to six years or Mandela (at a later stage) to life imprisonment?

That whereas the African women struggled valiantly during the fifties the men did not ('organised political activity had sunk back to pre-1949 levels' adds Nkoana, for good measure).

That in contrast to the defiance campaign the women's anti-pass demonstrations were not organized by the ANC. (The writer just stops short of openly claiming the women's demonstrations as PAC achievements!).

These impressions are directly in conflict with the facts which Mr. Nkoana has either forgotten or deliberately suppresses.

It is no disparagement of the splendid Pretoria demonstration of women, and many other such demonstrations, to point out that they were not really comparable with the 1952 defiance campaign in which the volunteers of all races (many of them, incidentally, women) deliberately flouted apartheid laws knowing the penalty was months of imprisonment. This pointless 'comparison' makes sense only when it is coupled with the artful innuendo that the women's demonstrations were not organized by the African National Congress and its allies.

Now Mr. Nkoana knows very well that the magnificent resistance to the introduction of passes for women from 1955 *onwards was an* ANC*-led campaign and that it was actively organized by the* ANC *Women's League supported by the non-racial Federation of South African Women. Why then does he not say so? Is this one of those instances where it may be 'expedient' to deny the undeniable truth?*

As for the petty-minded refusal to recognize the greatness of the 1952 campaign and to belittle it by the use of phrases such as 'only 8,000 participated' (went to jail sounds too impressive, does it not, Mr. Nkoana?) and 'fizzled out', let us hear what some of his colleagues have to say. Events were still too fresh in the minds of people for *The Africanist* (June-July 1958) to refuse to recognize that:

> The stakes of the ANC sky-rocketed: a disciplined grim struggle was carried on.

Even as late as January 1964 PAC leader E. L. Ntloedise writing in *Voice of Africa* conceded:

> In 1952 a country-wide defiance campaign was organised. This was designed by its organisers to defy all the unjust discriminatory laws. It was a very successful campaign and nearly paralysed the economy of the country.

Make up your minds, gentlemen!

In addition to the defiance campaign of 1952 about which PAC spokesmen differ so sharply in their estimates, the decade of the

fifties saw an unprecedented upsurge of mass struggles of all kinds led by the African National Congress. These were the years of the peasant revolts, the '£1 a day' campaign, the transport boycotts, the fight against 'Bantu' education, the potato boycott, the Congress of the People, followed by the mass Treason Trial and the militant 'Stand by Our Leaders!' demonstrations that accompanied it. Above all they were the years in which, for the first time in our country, the *national general political strike* made its appearance. Time and again the great industrial complexes of the Witwatersrand, the Eastern Cape, Natal and elsewhere were brought to a standstill, as hundreds of thousands of African and other workers answered the Congress call, and stayed at home. They struck for basic political demands, despite lack of recognized trade unions, loss of pay, police intimidation—and despite repeated scabbing appeals by most of the people who now lead PAC.

These heroic years are the very period of which Mr. Nkoana now writes that 'organised political activity had sunk back to pre-1949 levels', and of which (in the course of an article in *The New African,* October 1965) he alleges that the ANC 'expended its energies in futile efforts to stem the tide of African nationalism'. The only example he offers in support of this sweeping dismissal of a decade of heroic struggle, is his claim that the ANC

> attempted to stage nation-wide demonstrations at the time of the 'Whites only' election with the avowed aim of influencing the white electorate to remove Verwoerd's Nationalist Party and put in its place the equally reactionary United Party which is only the other side of the coin.

Mr. Nkoana cannot sustain this absurd allegation. If any leader of the ANC or any of the other Congresses had 'avowed' this 'aim' you can be sure that Mr. Nkoana would have produced evidence. The avowed purpose and aim of this demonstration as of others led by the ANC was to utilize the occasion of an exercise by the White minority of its exclusive right to political control, to demonstrate the unconditional demand of the Non-Whites for full democracy. As indicated in the previous article it was precisely in connection with the 1958 General Strike that the forces of the White state were mobilized as never before to deal with the African National Congress and those who responded to the call. The United Party and the so-called Bantu press went into action and called for strong government measures against the ANC. The army and the police force were mobilized. In their campaign of sabotage and opposition to the peoples' struggle the forerunners of PAC joined with the ruling class. It was for their scabbing activities during

this strike that Messrs. Leballo and Madzunya, founders of PAC, were expelled from the African National Congress. One wonders who were 'expending energies in attempts to stem the tide of African nationalism'—the ANC which time and again led the masses in action against White supremacy, or the PAC leaders, whose political careers began and ended in futile attempts to sabotage those actions, as strike-breakers for the White ruling classes.

COWARDLY ATTACKS

The history of the South African freedom struggle will be written and judged in our own country. We are content to leave this task to the future; it is not supporters of the Congress alliance who want to refight old polemics, but the PAC propagandists who, despite their own discreditable role in these events, insist on foisting on an uninformed public abroad a fantasy-laden version of the recent past. But they do not confine themselves to repeating and embellishing old myths. A consideration of their current outpourings shows that fertile imaginations are still at work, distorting and misreporting the present.

Perhaps the most unforgivable of the offences committed by the poison-pen of Matthew Nkoana are his repeated sneers and innuendoes against those of our leaders and heroes who are now, while he sits safely in London, in Vorster's jails, unable to reply. In at least one case, as we shall see, his malice extends even to our martyred dead.

In *Africa and the World* (February 1965) he writes that the two outstanding heroes of the South African people, Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, have been jailed 'for seeking . . . *to create bridges between the races,*'—with the jeering implication that they were trying to patch up some sort of 'bridge-building', Race-Relations type of compromise with White supremacy. Now the Rivonia trial received world-wide publicity. Even Mr. Douglas Rodgers who helps spread such unsavoury implications might be expected to be aware that in this trial (and the Umkonto trial which followed it) the African, Indian and White accused (the latter no doubt covered by Nkoana's description: 'Whites first and radicals second') faced the death sentence and were sent to jail for life because the Court had found that they were planning and preparing the military overthrow of the White state.

In the April 1965 issue of *Africa and the World,* Nkoana, with the obliging assistance of Rodgers, essays another smear against Nelson Mandela, impugning his loyalty to the principles and the

organization to which he has dedicated his life. He announces to his readers the sensational (but wholly imaginary)

> news from Robben Island . . . that Mandela has ordered the close to 200 Umkonto members jailed on the island to join the PAC when they come out of prison.

On this occasion he adds (an unusual concession for a PAC publicist) that his 'news' is 'not yet satisfactorily confirmed'. Six months later the same smear, in precisely the same terms, was regurgitated by Nkoana in the *Afro-Asian Journalist,* at which time one must presume it was still 'not yet satisfactorily confirmed', but what need has a journalist for confirmation when he can suck his 'news' out of his thumb?

Perhaps the most outrageous example of this mean, spiteful and disrespectful attitude towards our people, their heroes and their freedom struggle, appears in this writer's treatment of the first historic break with 'non-violence'—the Umkonto we Sizwe's sabotage explosions of December 16th, 1961. Criticizing Umkonto's reluctance to initiate bloodshed, Nkoana permits himself to write about the death on that day of the people's hero Petrus Molefe. In almost gloating and sneering terms he describes the incident as follows:

> Indeed the only loss of life which can properly be attributed to Umkonto throughout its activities thus far was the accidental blowing up of his own stomach by one of its cadres on the first day of operations December 16th, 1961.

In this sordid manner it is hoped to detract from the fact that the era of preparation for the armed revolutionary overthrow of the White state was ushered in by the ANC and its allies.

THE FREEDOM CHARTER

Perhaps in this most fertile field of misrepresentation, the lie of the most 'truly breath-taking audacity' relates to the way in which the PAC ideologists have distorted the Freedom Charter. The people whom Dan Tloome described in 1958 as the 'windbags, self-seekers and mischief-makers of the liberation struggle' had to find an 'ideological' basis for their splitting activity. As the Trotskyites did in a different field, so the bulk of these PAC 'militants' cover up their fear of real revolutionary activity by high-sounding phrase-mongering. Thus:

> With the exception that this policy (Freedom Charter) does not envisage—not expressly—the balkanising of the country on national or racial lines, it is not different from Dr. Verwoerd's plan for the

separate development of the races. It panders to racial bigotry no less than do the men of apartheid. *Africa and the World*, March 1965.

The reader will be astonished to learn that the clauses of the Freedom Charter which are quoted in support of this outrageous proposition are the following:

> *There shall be equal status in the bodies of the state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races;*
> *All people shall have equal rights to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs;*
> *All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride. . . .*

For the sake of completeness let us add the last paragraph of the section of the Freedom Charter which is left out by him;

> *All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.*

To suggest that this blueprint for a non-racial South Africa 'is not different from Dr. Verwoerd's' ideology and 'points to racial bigotry' can only be supported by one who has entered with Alice through the looking glass where words mean 'what I say they mean'.

Although it is not always an infallible guide, often the reaction of the enemy to a given political activity is some indication of its revolutionary content. Certainly, the Verwoerd regime saw in the Freedom Charter, and the Congress of the People which adopted it, the most potent threat to White privilege that had yet been made by the liberation movement. The Congress of the People itself was surrounded by over 2,000 armed police and 'under the barrels of sten-guns the draft charter was read and adopted, clause by clause, to the singing of Nkosi Sikelela i'Afrika and other patriotic songs'. (Introduction to *The Freedom Charter*—published by the ANC 1965).

Soon after its adoption the government went into action against the people's leaders for adopting the Charter. 156 of them were arrested and charged with high treason in a trial which was to last four long years. (The racial composition of the accused with the Africans in overwhelming majority was a picture of a future non-racial parliament). The show of unprecedented force including the dramatic use of military aircraft to transport the accused to one centre, the setting up of a special tribunal of three judges (a procedure reserved for trials during wartime and such like emergencies), the shooting down of a mass of demonstrators who in unprecedented numbers arrived at the court room—all this and more was a pointer to the revolutionary impact of the Freedom

Charter. In the words of the ANC pamphlet it was no doubt 'one of the great documents of the African Revolution'.

To attempt to convey the impression that this document panders to racial bigotry and is not different from Verwoerd's apartheid is to abandon the realm of reality. When the clauses to which Nkoana refers talk of equal rights which all national groups shall enjoy, they cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be interpreted to mean that each national group, irrespective of its size, will have the same say in public affairs. From every sentence of its poetic structure the Charter screams the thought that we shall be satisfied with absolutely nothing short of complete democratic rule. It requires no series of complex mental gymnastics to realize at once that what is envisaged is a society which will be governed by, and for the interests of, the majority.

What sort of political reasoning is it which sees in the entrenchment of national language rights, folk culture and custom, equal status in the courts and the schools for all national groups, protection against racial incitement and so on, a sinister plan to introduce apartheid? If this is so then every socialist country and many African states could be condemned in the same way.

The problems in the field of language, culture, etc., which will face the revolutionary regime of the South African people when the destruction of racialism has been achieved is a complex one and cannot be adequately dealt with in the context of the present article. I am confident, however, that just as the multi-group and multi-national states of the Soviet Union and China succeeded, so will we succeed in overcoming the problem of building a unitary state whilst at the same time giving impetus to the flowering of varied custom and culture whose development the ruling class has stifled for centuries. It is only one who is either blind or who does not wish to see who confuses such an approach with the perpetuation of group domination or inequality. Can the propositions which are contained in the Freedom Charter be faulted in relation to historic groups such as the Xhosa and the Basotho people? And what about the Coloured people? Have they got no language and no folk culture? Can anyone who has not got an axe to grind confuse the primitive ethnic philosophy of the White supremacists with the militant revolutionary programme of the Freedom Charter?

Not only does Mr. Nkoana distort the section he quotes by omitting the last paragraph (which would destroy his argument) but he also proceeds to base his interpretation of the section on allegations of 'fact' which do not bear examination.

THE CONGRESS ALLIANCE

Immediately after the statement he makes about the Charter pandering to apartheid and racial bigotry, he says the following:

> To make good their word, adherents of multi-racialism—the signatories to the charter—have created what is called the Congress Alliance operable at top level through the National Consultative Committee (N.C.C.). Each group *sends* two representatives to the N.C.C.; that is, equal representation irrespective of the size of the population group from which each has sprung, or of the following it commands.

Now it should be noted that the whole of this section of Nkoana's article is headed 'The Position Today' (i.e. March 1965) and the use of the present tense would indicate to the reader in England that the N.C.C. is still in operation. Mr. Nkoana must surely be aware that for various reasons, particularly the extreme difficulty of legal and illegal organizations co-operating on an official level in a police state, the N.C.C. ceased to operate as long ago as 1961. Why does he (in March 1965) try to give the impression that it is still functioning?

In any event it is absurd to treat the N.C.C. as if it were some sort of miniature parliament. It was not a 'legislative' body, or even a policy-making body. It was a meeting-ground where representatives of like-minded organizations could discuss and co-ordinate their plans for their common objective: the end of White supremacy, monopoly and privilege and the establishment of a democratic South Africa of 'equals, countrymen and brothers'.

As the name implies, the National Consultative Committee was created purely for the purpose of exchanging views and achieving closer unity in the common struggle for this objective. It was the expression of an alliance of independent organizations; hence it never originated policy, possessed executive powers or issued directions or decisions to the participating bodies. Hence the question of how many delegates were sent by each body to the N.C.C. was entirely irrelevant. In practice there were never any serious differences among the partners in the alliance, and if there had been there would have been no question of resolving them by means of a vote on the N.C.C.

Everyone who took part in the Congress alliance was fully aware of the truly fraternal relations between the organizations which took part in it: a brotherhood of trusted colleagues standing shoulder to shoulder in the fight, a unity tested and sealed in a thousand ordeals. To this day the record of our movement showed and still shows how we have stood together through thick and

thin, and will go on doing so till victory is won. Even the 'Africanist' predecessors who used to shout about alleged 'domination' of the ANC by the Congress of Democrats or by 'the Indians' must have been aware in their lucid moments that such wild charges were baseless, mere cynical demagogy for the purpose of whipping up chauvinism and prejudice. They failed miserably in their racialist appeal. The African masses, and above all the membership of the African National Congress, demonstrated their political maturity time and again by rejecting the PAC line.

Even more in exile in the outside world, the PAC leaders have found that their crude racialism does not pay, and have decided (to use the appropriate terminology of the admen and the 'public relations' underworld) to change their 'image'. Hence they have produced a few White and Indian supporters (none distinguished by their militancy when in South Africa) and admitted them to PAC membership. They have also struck up some sort of alliance with Mr. Barney Desai's dissident 'Coloured People's Congress' group in exile. This last phenomenon invites some curious speculations. What, one wonders, is the relationship? Unless Mr. Desai has agreed to become Mr. Nkoana's office-boy, surely it must be on the basis of equality. And if so, how does this differ from the much-criticized basis of the former N.C.C.?

But it is as vain to look for consistency and logic in the writings of the PAC leaders as it is to look for political integrity and plain honesty. The quotation from *The New African* which appears at the head of this article is followed by this sentence: 'In the long run however a denial of truth would be deleterious to man's spiritual well-being leading to the development of a stunted personality.' I suppose that in the interests of expediency Mr. Nkoana is prepared to take a chance on it.

(*The theme of this article is referred to in the Editorial Notes of this issue.—Editor,* THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST.)

Political Detainees in Algeria

Henri Alleg

IN A REVIEW of recent events in Algeria (THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST, No. 23, page 68) it is stated that 'Almost all of those so summarily arrested were released shortly afterwards, without any public explanation.' Unfortunately this is not the case.

At a press conference held last September, the Minister of Information in the Boumedienne government, Bachir Boumaza, announced the arrest of a number of militants belonging to the Organization of Popular Resistance, indicating that names of all those arrested would be made public at an early date. Pending this disclosure, he gave the names of three detained leaders: Hocine Zahouane, member of the political bureau of the F.L.N., Bachir Hadj Ali, former secretary of the Algerian Communist Party, and Mohammed Harbi, member of the central committee of the F.L.N., who were arrested several weeks before the others. At that time Boumaza laid stress on the allegation (which was untrue) that most of those arrested were Europeans, some of whom had acquired Algerian nationality, and who, he alleged, were the instigators and leaders of the movement.

More than three months have passed, and in spite of the Minister's promise, no official list of the militants detained in Algiers and elsewhere has yet been published. The reason is fairly easy to guess—to publish such a list would destroy the allegation made by the men responsible for the putsch, that opposition to the regime was organized by 'foreigners allied to the Algerian Communists who penetrated the F.L.N.'.

In fact the Europeans who are still detained and those who have been expelled from Algeria constitute only a minority. It is difficult to accept that all Algerians who take a position against the military dictatorship, thereby remaining faithful to the Algerian Constitution and the political principles of the Charter of Algiers, are necessarily former members of the Algerian Communist Party.

Another promise which has not been kept by the regime is that they would publish a White Paper on the Administration of the former President. No more has been heard about it—for the good reason that most of the former Ministers are still in their jobs. If they were to criticize the previous administration, it is their own

mismanagement which they would have to expose. They would also have to explain why all the difficulties which were hysterically attributed to Ben Bella have only got worse as the revolutionary principles were abandoned. Failing to find political arguments, the men of June 19th have chosen silence and silent repression.

However in spite of censorship and the climate of terror being imposed in Algeria, the truth is filtering through. It reveals a sinister picture. Arbitrary arrests, search raids accompanied by brutality and plunder of apartments visited; assaults and torture during interrogation of suspects—all these bring back a past which it was hoped had gone for ever. At this point we must admit that torture had not completely disappeared with the ending of the colonial regime. But at least, during the former government, Ben Bella had the courage to condemn these barbaric practices which were openly attacked on several occasions within the F.L.N. Unfortunately, as was proved by later events, he did not have the power to make his police and military security respect the constitution, and they have emulated the colonial para-commandos.

Today these methods are given official cover. The members of the government merely deny these charges or hypocritically regret them, whilst it is the 'Revolutionary Council' which collectively decided the measures against President Ben Bella (detained for many months without anyone being able to contact him) and against those who have been arrested since.

After weeks of detention in secret caves where the prisoners are brought blindfolded, about fifty prisoners accused of belonging to the opposition and charged (as once were members of the F.L.N.) with 'criminal association' were brought before the Algiers Courts. To this procedure they owe the privilege of being held at the El Harrash prison (formerly the Square House, well known to the patriots of the liberation struggle). These prisoners have been able to see their lawyers and families. They have all confirmed what was already known. There is hardly one of those arrested who has not been tortured, often on numerous occasions. The Public Prosecutor has on his files as many cases of assault as prosecutions against the accused.

Here is one of the cases: that of Gilberte Taleb, secretary of *Alger Républicaine,* former anti-fascist resistance member, tortured by the Vichy police and imprisoned in the same women's jail in which she finds herself today. After her arrest by members of the Military Security, she was beaten, undressed, and tortured by electricity and water techniques. When her torturers failed to break

her silence, they forced her to witness the tortures used on one of her friends.

For the others who have not had the 'good fortune' to be transferred to an 'official' prison, the horror goes on. It goes on for twelve militants of the Organization of Popular Resistance, considered by the authorities to be the leaders of the opposition. Amongst these twelve, of whom nothing has been officially heard for over three months except that they are in the grip of their guards, are Hocine Zahouane, Mohammed Harbi and Bachir Hadj Ali, who have been particularly singled out by the torturers. It has been learnt unofficially that these twelve have been transferred to the prison of Lambése, in Constantine. Some of them are in a serious condition as a result of assaults in detention.

The aim—cynically acknowledged in Boumedienne's entourage—is to hold them incommunicado for as long as possible, in violation of elementary international principles of law and of the Algerian Constitution.

During this prolonged silence, their files will be 'completed'. Rumours are circulating in Algiers that they may be charged with planning the assassination of certain high personalities of the regime ; that they would be tried by special courts ; and that the judges, specially selected, would then pronounce the death penalty in camera.

The lives of these men are therefore seriously threatened, particularly those of Hocine Zahouane, Mohammed Harbi and Bachir Hadj Ali, who are especially hated by the leaders of the putsch. Their lives and those of their comrades must be saved by international democratic opinion intervening on their behalf with the Algerian authorities, demanding respect of their normal rights as accused persons, particularly their right to legal representation.

In France a Committee for the Defence of Ahmed Ben Bella and Political Detainees in Algeria has been formed. It already has over three hundred members, amongst whom are François Mauriac, Jean Paul Sartre, Louis Martin Chauffier, Robert Merle, Michel Butor, J. M. Domenach, François Châtelet, Marcel Cohen, Françoise Sagan, Louis Daquin, Claude Bourdet, Nathalie Sarraute, Yves Montand and other well-known personalities. New signatures are arriving each day (from Great Britain, Bertrand Russell has just sent his support) but the protest should grow yet louder, so that they can hear in Algiers the voices and the deep feelings of all those who were the faithful friends of struggling Algeria in its

darkest hours, and who cannot conceive that she should once again become the land of arbitrary arrests and violence.

HENRI ALLEG.

(*We hope to publish, in our next issue, a full analysis by Henri Alleg of the present situation in Algeria.—Editor,* THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST.)

Somehow we survive
and tenderness, frustrated, does not wither.

Investigating searchlights rake
our naked unprotected contours ;

over our heads the monolithic decalogue
of fascist prohibition glowers
and teeters for a catastrophic fall ;

boots club on the peeling door.

But somehow we survive
severance, deprivation, loss.

Patrols uncoil along the asphalt dark
hissing their menace to our lives,

most cruel, all our land is scarred with terror,
rendered unlovely and unlovable ;
sundered are we and all our passionate surrender

but somehow tenderness survives.

DENNIS BRUTUS.

Liberation of the Southland

The Crucial Tasks before Africa

A. Lerumo

LIKE A FLASH OF LIGHTNING, the storm over the criminal Smith regime has illuminated the crucial issue before all Africa today—the liberation of the South. Of course all Africans with the slightest spark of patriotism bitterly resent the daily hardships, humiliations and enslavement of their oppressed brothers and sisters in the Portuguese colonies, Zimbabwe, the Republic of South Africa and South West Africa. But this is more than a question of sympathy and sentiment. In truth the whole future of our continent, of all African states, is in the balance.

Africa cannot long continue half-slave, half-free. White colonialism, whether based in Salisbury, Lisbon or Pretoria, is not only an unendurable insult to the spirit of Free Africa. It is an ever-present danger to the independence and progress of every African state. The unholy alliance whose capital is Pretoria is the most dangerous centre of anti-democratic and anti-African intrigue, of neo-colonialist economic penetration, on the whole of the African continent.

It is from here that Oppenheimer's Anglo-American Corporation and other financial and mining octopuses spread their tentacles to Zambia, the Congo and elsewhere in the North. African poverty in the North drives hundreds of thousands of contract labourers to the South African mines to live in prison-like compounds and risk illness and accidents for beggarly pay. Thus the South African Randlords have a vested interest in continuing poverty in Basutoland, Swaziland, Bechuanaland, Malawi and everywhere in Africa.

It was from amongst the Whites in the Republic and Rhodesia that Tshombe brought hired murderers to drown the Congo in blood.

The African countries cannot close their eyes to the massive military build-up, with the direct aid of the imperialist countries of the anti-African regime in the South. The Republic of South Africa is currently spending R2300 million (£115 million) a year on its armed forces which are equipped with United States and

British tanks, French and British armoured cars, British, French and American aircraft, and British naval vessels including helicopter carriers. Although military service is restricted to members of the three million white minority, armed groups (including the 30,000 strong militarized police and part-time units like the skiet-commandos) total over 113,000, according to the British Institute of Strategic Studies. This is a fantastic proportion for peace time of the white men of military age in full-time or part-time military units. If, say, Nigeria mobilized on the same scale she would have over two million men under arms.

South Africa and Portugal are linked by open or secret military alliances to the United States, Britain and other Nato powers. In particular the West German government, many of whose senior personnel are linked with Verwoerd and Vorster and many of their lieutenants by former Nazi associations, is taking a particular interest in elaborating joint plans for the production of weapons of mass destruction and for a common all-African military strategy in conjunction with the Unholy Alliance of Lisbon, Pretoria and Salisbury.

Southern Africa, especially the Republic and South West Africa, has attracted some of the most reactionary figures in the world: top Nazis seeking sanctuary from Nuremberg and other trials of war criminals; diehard white supremacists from Kenya, Algeria and other African countries whence they have fled from the victorious advance of the African Revolution, still nursing dreams and feverishly plotting for revenge and a come-back; fascist refugees from as far afield as Hungary and Cuba.

Southern Africa is a source of grave danger, therefore, for Africa. It is, indeed, a source of fascist contamination all over the world. Verwoerd and Ian Smith are the heroes and the hope of fascist groups in Britain, of the Ku Klux Klan and the Goldwaterites in America, of right-wing elements in the Australian government. They represent the decaying but still dangerous remnants of the theory of world domination by the white master-race that had its origins in the British and other West European empires, that reached its ultimate lunacy in Hitler's extermination camps and that should have been buried with his corpse in the ruins which he had brought to Berlin.

A PRICELESS ASSET

Just as Southern Africa enslaved is a deadly menace to the freedom and progress of Africa, so Southern Africa free would be

a priceless asset for our continent in the urgent tasks of regeneration, of united peaceful construction, which face all of our people. With an industrial potential equal to that of the rest of the continent combined, a liberated South Africa would overnight help to transform the tremendous problems which today face all who plan or who think of the industrialization of our countries, the development of transport, education, scientific agriculture and health services and similar projects on an all-continental scale. So important and dynamic is the contribution which the free South can and will make that discussions or planning of all-African unity in many fields is bound to lack reality.

It is for reasons such as these that the future of the unliberated Southern territories is of far more than indirect or sympathetic interest to the peoples of all Africa. It is their own future, their independence, their security and future prosperity which are at stake. That is why Smith's attempt to perpetuate white minority rule in Zimbabwe has correctly been assessed as a declaration of war against Africa. That is why there has been a storm of anger throughout the Continent directed not only against Smith and his accomplices in crime, but also against the British authorities who permitted the crime, connived at it, and if not driven, reluctantly by African and world pressure, would still like to shed a few crocodile tears, accept 'an accomplished fact' and allow the Smith regime to get away with it.

Throughout the negotiations with the Smith regime, during the stormy session at UNO when the African representatives correctly walked out on Wilson, and in all their public declarations, the British government have consistently reiterated that the 'Rhodesian crisis' is Britain's responsibility. This is an ambiguous phrase. It is certainly true that the British government—both the Conservatives and the present Labour administration—are directly responsible for what has happened. They concocted and approved the notorious 1961 Constitution designed to ensure a continuance of minority white rule for the indefinite future, and in terms of which Smith's Rhodesian Front was returned to office by an overwhelming majority of the settler vote. They permitted the Smith clique to install a regime of police terror, to outlaw the Zimbabwe African People's Union, and other liberation movements, and to detain Mr. Joshua Nkomo and thousands of other African patriots as well as white elements who sympathized with the Africans. The 'rebellion' of November 11th, 1965, when Smith unilaterally declared 'Independence', was no secret conspiracy. For a very long

time he and his colleagues had quite openly been preparing for and threatening that very action.

Although British imperialism is responsible for what has happened in Salisbury, we can never agree that the future of Zimbabwe or any other African territory should remain the responsibility of the British government. We can never agree, both on principle and for practical reasons. On principle, we must say that the many years of so-called responsibility by Britain, France and other European countries was never anything but disastrous for our countries and our peoples, and we simply will not tolerate any more of it. And on the practical side, let it be said that though it was so well-advertised in advance, Smith's action found the British authorities completely unprepared to deal with it realistically and effectively. Denunciations of his regime as 'rebels' and 'traitors' have had as little effect on his thick hide as a pea-shooter against a rhinoceros. And so far as economic sanctions are concerned, one finds it hard to believe that Mr. Wilson was serious when he told the Lagos 'Commonwealth' meeting that he expected them to bring about the collapse of the regime in 'a matter of weeks'. Certainly the cutting off of oil supplies, if it is efficiently implemented, would seriously disrupt the economy, but such measures alone cannot put an end to Smith's police state. Verwoerd's Republic, though cautiously avoiding too close an identification with the 'Rhodesians', is an open gate through which essential supplies are continuing and will continue to reach the outlaws in Salisbury. This brings us to reconsider the problem of 'sanctions', not only against the Rhodesian but also against the South African regime.

MILITARY AND OTHER SANCTIONS

For many years Britain, the United States and other imperialist countries have stubbornly resisted the application of economic sanctions against apartheid. When such measures were proposed by the African, Asian and socialist countries at the United Nations and elsewhere, the imperialists claimed that such measures could never succeed in the objective of changing the regime. Yet now these very countries express the greatest confidence that identical measures will be completely successful in changing the Smith government.

The apparent paradox is not very hard to understand. The blanket term 'war' in reality covers a wide spectrum of relations between nations, war being as Clausewitz pointed out in his cele-

brated dictum 'a continuation of policy by other means'. The breaking of diplomatic, commercial and other relations with countries is an almost invariable accompaniment of a state of war; but it is possible to conceive of the breaking off of such relations as an intermediate step without actually being accompanied by armed hostilities. To put it in another way: there is no hard and fast dividing line between 'sanctions' on the one hand and violent conflict on the other. Military measures are the ultimate sanction.

The manifest differences between the African and other anti-apartheid countries on the one hand, and the imperialist bloc on the other, concerning international measures both against Salisbury and Pretoria, appear superficially to relate only to the *means* of ending these racist dictatorships. The imperialists argue that economic sanctions would cause suffering to the poor Africans in South Africa; that military measures would lead to bloodshed in Zimbabwe. By implication the African states are made out to be callous to suffering and bloodthirsty; the imperialists are by contrast (so they would have us think) very humane and practically pacifists.

These arguments are being advanced at the very period of history when the American invaders, with the full backing of Britain, are conducting one of the most ruthless wars in history: a war involving indiscriminate slaughter of the civilian population of both South and North Vietnam. They are employing such tactics as bombing populated areas from the air, poison gas, and massive destruction of food crops and the burning of villages, with the objective of forcing a small nation to submit to foreign domination. These 'pacifists' have been fighting, in some part of the world or other, practically continuously since the end of the Second World War—indeed for the past century and more. They are the last people in the world to claim that they are opposed in principle to military solutions.

Arguments based on alleged reluctance to cause hardship or to use force are in fact of little relevance to the ending of the white minority dictatorships in the South of Africa. These regimes are daily causing the most extreme hardship and starvation to millions of people, and they are only maintained by the continuous and intolerable use of force and terror on a mass scale against the population.

The truth is that it is not really a difference regarding 'means' which separates the imperialists from the African states regarding the south. It is a difference about *aims,* about the 'policy' to be 'continued by other means'.

The *aim* of all African states, as that of the overwhelming majority of mankind, is to replace the white minority despotisms in the South with majority governments—which in each case means government predominantly by the representatives of the African indigenous population who form by far the greater part of the population.

The aim of the imperialists is to preserve as much as they can of the structure of monopolization of resources and of forced African labour which makes the Southland such a huge source of golden profits to them.

Regimes like that of Smith and Verwoerd carry out the job of administering and policing this type of structure very well and enthusiastically. Imperialism is reluctant to abandon them, lest they might be followed by radical, patriotic governments which would proceed with far-reaching measures to restore the national wealth to the people, raise living standards—and thus deprive Western investors of their super-profits.

At the same time, it is recognized by most sections of imperialism (though not of course by the white Southern Africans) that these regimes are not indefinitely viable and will sooner or later have to be abandoned altogether. They are incurably tainted with the outspoken racial arrogance which, in its present neo-colonialist phase, 'the West' is so anxious to disavow. The crude anti-Africanism of Verwoerd and Smith, their followers and supporters, has become an acute embarrassment to the salesmen of the new line ('colonialism is dead; the West is the friend of the New Africa')—a line already difficult enough to put across even without such dubious associates.

But this general conclusion has been reached reluctantly and half-heartedly. It is bitterly resisted by that section of monopoly capitalism (represented by the British South Africa Company gentry headed by Lord Salisbury and Julian Amery) and the 'South Africa Lobby' in the United States, (whose most outspoken representative is millionaire Charles Engelhardt, but also includes such giants as General Motors, Ford and Chrysler) which has a substantial investment stake in Southern Africa.

So far as public opinion is concerned, it is true that apartheid and white supremacy have been vigorously condemned in resolutions of the Labour Party and trade unions in Britain, Civil Rights leaders in the U.S., and by broad sections of humanitarian, religious and liberal opinion. But it is equally true that white chauvinism, sedulously cultivated over a very long period of Britain's imperial hey-day and the prolonged and still-continuing

heritage of Negro slavery in the United States, remains a potent political factor in both these mutilated bourgeois democracies. (That is one of the reasons why the Labour government has been so desperately anxious to carry the Tory leadership along with it at every phase of the Rhodesian crisis; they lack the courage to campaign vigorously against racialism—hence their notorious policy on Commonwealth immigration, a craven surrender of principle—and are terrified of a Tory appeal to the voters to 'stand by our kith and kin in Rhodesia'.)

These are some of the main reasons which explain the curiously ambivalent policy of British imperialism and its partners towards the crisis precipitated by Ian Smith. Little as they are enamoured of Smith, and much as they would like to have had a more skilful and less unruly and crude neo-colonialist administration in Salisbury, they are not prepared to see a truly representative and radical African administration in Zimbabwe which would spell the end of the 'Zambezi line' and the beginning of the end of apartheid. This explains the heavy emphasis placed by Wilson on the 'constitutional' formalities of Smith's 'rebellion'—the complaint is not that Smith runs a police state which grossly oppresses the African majority, but that he has committed treason against the Queen. It explains why he keeps repeating that Africans in Zimbabwe 'are not ready' for majority rule (compare his statement, when leader of the opposition, and still talking like a Labour man, 'no constitution is defensible which fails to allow the people of these territories to control their own destinies. . . . We have bitterly attacked the Southern Rhodesian constitution for that'). It explains, above all, why he insists that the solution of the Rhodesia crisis is Britain's sole responsibility, that it shall not be resolved by military sanctions (which might provoke an unmanageable African uprising), and is frenziedly manoeuvring, with trips to and fro by the Chief Justice, official and unofficial feelers to white businessmen and tobacco farmers and even to Smith and elements of the Rhodesian Front itself, to try and patch together some sort of compromise administration, headed perhaps by some discredited figure from the past like Roy Welensky.

In a word, 'sanctions' are preferred to military action of the type which British governments have always used without hesitation against rebellious colonies, because they leave the door open to negotiations and a future sell-out which will postpone indefinitely the transfer of power to the African majority.

THE ROLE OF THE AFRICAN STATES

Here, then is the essential conflict between the imperialists and the African countries; not an argument about means, military or otherwise, but about ends—though as pointed out above both issues are very closely related. The African masses can never accept that their brothers in Zimbabwe are 'not ready' to resume the independence of which they were deprived by Rhodes's hired mercenaries seventy years ago, or that the white minority dictatorship should continue a day longer. They couldn't care a damn whether Mr. Smith is loyal to Her Majesty or a rebel; but they care passionately that he is enslaving Africans, keeping Mr. Nkomo, who should be Prime Minister, in a concentration camp, and buttressing up apartheid, the mortal enemy of all Africa.

Africans have—for a long time before Smith took the plunge—seen that precisely this situation was coming. Their leaders and spokesmen have raised it time and again, at the Organization of African Unity, at the United Nations General Assembly, and at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, throughout 1964 and 1965. They demanded suspension of the 1961 constitution and independence under a one-man-one-vote government. They warned Britain of the most serious consequences should African majority interests be once again betrayed.

When Smith did take the plunge, African reaction was immediate and unambiguous. At a special meeting of the O.A.U. they demanded that Britain take immediate military steps to crush the 'slave-owners rebellion'—failing which, within a specified short period, they would break off diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom. Great demonstrations took place in support of these demands in various African countries, and a number of Union Jacks were burnt in public.

No doubt these very sharp reactions helped to stiffen the British government's attitude to some extent. They led to an acceptance of oil sanctions, originally rejected both by the government and the Tory opposition. They compelled the British, unwillingly, to bring the matter before the United Nations—in order to forestall, as Wilson confessed in Parliament, the matter being brought there by others.

All the same, however well justified by the situation, the O.A.U. ultimatum to Britain, and the subsequent course of events, cannot but lead to some searching questions. Over thirty states agreed that diplomatic relations should be broken off. All honour to the nine states (including two Commonwealth countries, Ghana and

Tanzania) which honoured their commitment. But what about the others? It is very correct to take strong action when it is justified by events of profound importance, such as the Rhodesian crisis. But to threaten strong action and then to fail to carry out your threat is both foolish and humiliating. It would be better not to make the threat in the first place.

Going still deeper into the situation, since the situation south of the Zambezi in reality concerns the African states far more closely and directly than it does Britain, why was the O.A.U. demand limited to British military intervention? Smith's action, as we have said, was a declaration of war against Africa. Why, except for a token (but nevertheless perfectly proper) mobilization by Ghana, have no steps been taken by our leaders to prepare and plan those African military measures which would be able to answer the Smith racialists in the only language they understand?

Like so many other aspects of this profoundly revealing and illuminating Zimbabwe crisis, it has thrown a bright light both on the strength and the weakness of the Organization of African Unity and the independent states which make up its membership.

Its strength is the unanimity of mass feeling and understanding on such great all-African issues as the liberation of the Southland, compelling every leader (always excepting that incorrigible Black Englishman, Dr. Banda) to adopt in public a firm patriotic stand.

Its weakness is not only the economic (and hence military) backwardness which makes the inevitable showdown with the whites-only regimes seem such a formidable proposition. The history of our times—Cuba, Algeria, above all, invincible, heroic Vietnam—is full of examples of the dictum that determined fighters for the freedom of their country can overcome the superior weapons and technology of oppressors.

Our people do not lack patriotism and determination. What they lack is the leadership and the unity of purpose to enable them to carry through the liberation of our continent to its logical and essential end.

TWO TRENDS IN AFRICA

The 'Rhodesian' crisis, like every major crisis which has faced our peoples during the few short years of the first phase of independence, has revealed, behind the formal unity achieved at meetings of heads of state, two completely different and, in the end, incompatible trends within Africa itself.

There is the trend which, when fundamental African interests

are involved, is prepared to stand up and resist imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, even at the costs of temporary sacrifices and hardships.

And there is the trend which is prepared to sacrifice fundamental African interests, perhaps even to sell out the hard-won independence of our peoples, for the sake of maintaining 'good relations' with Paris, London or Washington, and for the sake of dollar, franc and pound aid—'aid' which often gets no further than the greedy hands of opportunist politicians, bureaucrats and parasites.

We know that we have many patriotic, clear-headed and resolute leaders in Africa, men like Presidents Nkrumah and Nyerere whose uncompromising stand over Rhodesia has shown their dedication, and given Africa reason to be proud of them. Nor are we forgetting the skilful and principled stand of President Kaunda, in the extremely difficult situation which the heritage of imperialism has placed his country and his people.

But we also will not forget, or forgive, those who were tried in this crucial period and found wanting, who stood by shamelessly without protest when Wilson said Africans were 'not ready' to govern themselves, agreed with a period of British 'direct' rule after Smith goes, and connived to prolong African enslavement and save the face of the imperialists.

It is impossible to overlook the relationship between these two trends in African governments and the class forces which they express. Certainly it is incorrect and un-Marxist to transfer mechanically to Africa, in one's thinking, the historically formed, 'polarized' and hardened class relationships and contradictions which are so well-established a feature of the West European and North American political scene. Nevertheless the steadily clarifying picture—despite notable exceptions—is that the minority, privileged classes and groups in Africa, backward-looking tribal chiefs and feudal emirs who feel their status dwindling with the development of the New Africa; the profiteering merchants, capitalists and Western-orientated intellectuals, including the generals groomed at Sandhurst and St. Cyr, are the least patriotic elements in our continent. It is they who offer the greatest danger to the modernization, unity and complete liberation of our continent, who act as a barrier and even a potential fifth column in the all-important, and far from completed anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist revolution.

The Rhodesian crisis, precisely because it was and remains such a profound challenge to Africa, has dramatically brought out this vital question. And so long as Africans are denied equal rights in

Zimbabwe or anywhere in the South, that challenge will remain, a vital threat to our independence, a standing and intolerable humiliation and reminder of our weakness and disunity.

It is above all the working classes, the urban proletariat and the vast mass of poverty-stricken rural people, who are most vitally interested in ending this scandal, in struggling against the political-ideological and economic remnants of colonial servitude which are rooted in reactionary social strata. It is time for the workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals all over our continent to wake up, to organize themselves in effective and dynamic mass movements, including the most advanced elements, the Marxists, so as to clean their countries of treacherous and corrupt neo-colonialist regimes, and establish patriotic national administrations. Such administrations are not only essential for the immediate advance of living, health, administrative and educational standards of the masses; they are essential also if our countries are to meet the inescapable threat, challenge and opportunity that lies in the South.

The road to African freedom, progress and unity begins at home, in each African country; but it is a road that must lead, before victory is achieved, through Salisbury, Pretoria and Cape Town.

The Imperialist Stake in Apartheid

A Correction

P. Tlale writes:

Regarding my article 'The Imperialist Stake in Apartheid' (AFRICAN COMMUNIST No. 23) there is an error in Table I (p. 28) showing South Africa's foreign liabilities. The figure for indirect investments in the private sector at the end of 1963 is given as £583 million. It should read £383 million. On page 34, line 14 from top, a figure for American direct investments in S.A. manufacturing industry at the same period is given as $518 million. It should read $158 million, as shown in the immediately following Table V. Please convey to readers, with my apologies, these corrections.

JACK COPE ON BANTU ORAL POETIC TRADITION

Joseph Mofolo Bulane

WE ARE COMING ACROSS a phenomenon in South African intellectual circles which, because it sets the tone in the liberal school of thought and it wields tremendous influence among those at home kindly disposed towards us, cannot be ignored.

Mr. J. Cope has made two damaging statements* which seem to contradict him as a rebel politician, in a sense, protesting against the inhumane policies of his government. It would seem that the statements in question, unfortunately, do not vary much from what the herrenvolk professes. He asserts that Bantu oral poetry is not poetry in the modern literary sense. Secondly, he alleges that contemporary literature in Bantu languages teems with '*poetry based on the traditional izibongi and songs . . . striving with a heavy and sometimes deleterious influence from European forms, theme, and style.*'†

Earlier on he had conceded that the Bantu praise poem has something homeric. That is to say that the Bantu praise poem, like any other, is an epic piece of poetic creation that reflects epoch-making events. It is a depiction of historical feats of a whole people in moments of tension; it is their heroic deeds in times of peace and war. There is something more to it. It is a forthright statement of a people's view of the universe, their philosophy of life, at that particular stage of human development. We find in it the history of human relations, the history of those relations into which people enter irrespective of whether or not they wish so. We find in it an expression of human dignity, an appreciation of beauty and a condemnation of all the anti-human, evil, contemptible. It is a conscious, creative effort in which there is an interplay of both imagination and fantasy.

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* *"Contrast"*, Summer 1963-64, Cape Town. Mr. J. Cope is the author of *The Albino* and other novels.

† See my article in *The African Communist*, April-June, 1965, on South African Literature.

Let us take a few examples from the Bantu oral poetic tradition. *Shaka, King of the Zulus* has been rendered into English by Dr. A. C. Jordan, the author of the Xhosa classic, *The Anger of the Gods.*

He is Shaka the unshakable,
Thunder-while-sitting, son of Menzi.
He is the bird that preys on other birds,
The battle-axe that excels other battle-axes.
He is the long-strided-pursuer, son of Ndaba,
Who pursued the moon and the sun.
He is a great hubbub like the rocks of Nkandla
Where the elephants take shelter
When the heavens frown.
'Tis he whose spears resound causing wailings,
Thus old women shall stay in abandoned homes,
And old men shall drop by the way-side.‡

Without going into a detailed analysis of the excerpt quoted above, it is quite obvious that this is poetry. It has all the requirements of what has become to be known as poetry. In fact, it is far richer, in form and content, than the stark images that stare from some anthologies of European poetry.

Praise poems of the Zulu chiefs have been collected and published by R. Dhlomo. They comprise very valuable material awaiting study and translation since they are available only in Zulu. Some of the brilliant verses of the Zulu praise poem, in Zulu, figure in Thomas Mofolo's (1887-1948) historical novel, *Chaka,* a classic in Sesotho literature, published at Morija in 1928, exactly a hundred years after Chaka's tragic death at the hands of his younger brother, Dingaan.

In 1838 Dingaan's *impi* played a havoc upon the Voortrekker Piet Relief with his followers. It is held that so many Boers were slaughtered that the river, where this occurred, turned red with blood. That river subsequently bore the name: *Blood River.* Dingaan's praise poem, composed on this occasion, in Mr. Jack Cope's translation, runs as follows:

River crossing of the slippery stones
for there slipped on the stones Piet and his son.
He felled Piet and the Boers, he slew Pieter,
he ate up the Boer with the broken teeth
and him whose teeth are sharp.
He felled the one with a stone flintlock gun
and the Boer with the powerful arms.

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‡ A Zulu friend says the two last lines belong to a praise poem of Mpande, Shaka's younger brother.

dependence meant above all new possibilities to enrich themselves, and possibilities of access to economic positions which before independence had been held by the French colonialists. Part of the petty bourgeoisie in its turn, while wanting to be protected against the big boys, saw in independence above all the possibility of being able to acquire shops and the like at low prices, as well as good jobs in the administration and in private companies. Thus those whose interests were directly encroached upon and those who feared that their prospects for advancement might be limited, found themselves united against the measure taken by the Government and its non-capitalist choice.

That is basically the reason for the clash of the various tendencies which have torn the F.L.N. since independence and right up to the last crisis in Kabylia. Those opposing forces, whatever flag they fly, in fact defend directly or indirectly the class interests of those who do not accept the political orientation of the new Algeria.

Thus the situation becomes clearer every day—one is either for the Ben Bella Government and its revolutionary measures, or one is against it.

The seekers of personal wealth, of all sorts, have already chosen their side. Rather than accept this 'dictatorship of the poor' they are ready to ally themselves with the neo-colonialists whose positions remain strong. They have sent their money to France and Switzerland and they are plotting more or less openly for the overthrow of the government. And on the other side, the workers in the towns, the agricultural workers, the unemployed, the fellaheen, the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie are with President Ben Bella and his Government.

Abroad the same cleavage came about between the true friends of the Algerian Revolution and those who took fright at the position it took up alongside the world peace forces, alongside those who are building socialism.

MOROCCO

The most recent example is the conflict unleashed on Algeria's western frontiers by King Hassan II, representative of Morocco's big bourgeoisie and feudal lords, because he fears that the Algerian revolutionary 'virus' might contaminate Africa and his own country in the first place. Behind the Moroccan aggression are the imperialists of every hue, who have only been made more prudent by the setbacks suffered over Cuba and the lessons they learned there.

The crushing diplomatic defeat sustained by Morocco at Bamako has shown in striking fashion which side had the sympathies of the African people, and what pressure these sympathies can bring to bear.

Mokhachane's Letlama crashed thro' a mountain with his chest,
As tho' the big mountain were a sand-dune;
He battered it and shattered the cliffs!
Were the mute mountains with tongues imbued,
His feats by Boqate could be sung:
Because the Illustrious Son is a cannibal
When the booming of the guns his ears assails!

Again, Chief Seeiso Griffith has the following pieces:

(When he was going to hold Qoatsa)
The rites of Chieftainship performed,
He was given a stick mixed with the iron piece,
The crooked stick with a jutting part;
And the horn of sooty stuff capped the ritual.

(When he was going to see the British High Commissioner in Pretoria)
Off came Letlama's giant,
And sauntered about and around,
Drawing the brows and making faces the while.
His face Mokoena now and again brightened:
With the teasing spectacle of being wooed,
The poor missuses' faces cracked into grins oblique!

Mr. Cope alleges that this is not poetry because, as he says, it is still in the mainstream of oral tradition. It is unfair to deny the artistic essence of the Bantu oral literature for the simple reason that it has not been made available in writing. A Mosotho *poet* charges with his spear, shield, and head-dress of ostrich feathers:

Letlama, gird yourself
That the sea may echo with your stir,
That the wind may blow from all the corners of the earth,
That it may blow down Phuthiatsana (River);
That frost may fall, and cornfields forfeit their promising yield;
That the storm may come, and rivulets overflow;
That the trees may be uprooted,
And the bull-frog be caught up in the flotsam;
That Motanyane may be exposed to the sight of the girls,
Motanyane transformed into a rock,
Transformed into the miracle of the ritual of maiden puberty!

The year 1880 saw the vicious Gun War in Basutoland, the sole aim of which was to disarm the Basotho people, thereby leaving them to the tender mercies of the Boers, then armed to the teeth. Although some Basotho surrendered to the discriminating law of the colonial government at the Cape, there was a fierce resistance, at Mount Moorosi and elsewhere, in Basutoland. Mr. Mphahlele quotes an extract from a praise poem of the Mosotho hero of that War:

Deep in his pool the crocodile glared,
He glared with his blood-red eyes,

And lo! the young white braves were drowned,
Ay, they fell into the jaws of the snake,
The black snake, khanyapa.

The Bantu poetic tradition strikes another, if different, plain. It is poetry of love, where a Bantu young woman grows restless over the absence of her *pupil's eye*. Different from a praise poem, it is confined to the internal world of the lyrical heroine. At once it suggests a penetration into the mind and feelings of an individual, only that it lacks the subjectivism and egotism into which lyrical poetry degenerated later in the day:

The far-off mountains hide you from me,
While the nearer ones overhang me;
Would that I had a heavy sledge
To crush the mountains near me;
Would that I had wings like a bird
To fly over those farther away.

In Basutoland the maidens have broken forth with a song, in the same vein: *The mountains are barriers . . .*

* * *

In this article we have tried to demonstrate that Mr. Cope's allegations do not hold together. The pieces quoted (they are extracts since the praise poems are long) speak for themselves and, more than that, for the people who created them. Let us not be hoodwinked into believing that we owe our poetic tradition to Europe. Without history and culture. The white man's burden.

What about European influences in the contemporary poetry in Bantu languages? European influence is another stereotype that springs from the wrong assumption that the African is not capable of a single creative effort worthy to talk about. The poems by Mqhayi, Jolobe, Jordan in Xhosa, and Vilakazi, Kunene, Jr., in Zulu, and D. C. T. Bereng, Ntsane, Khaketla and Makara in Sesotho are all deeply rooted in the Bantu oral poetic tradition. The two latter poets in Sesotho, it is true, have allowed mysticism and simplistic aping mania to creep into their otherwise splendid poetic effort. This is a reflection of the forces at work in their world rather than the imitation of the European style, theme and what-not that Mr. Cope suspects.

In our complicated world, oral poetry can only be a starting point, our cosmodrome as we scale the literary heights. The modern poet cannot fetter his creative imagination with themes and concepts connected with the harmony of the seasons and the changing phases of the moon. There are far-reaching aspects, thoughts and

experiences which, having outgrown the limitations of the past century, are now pressing forth for a bold and apt expression in poetic images by genuine, as opposed to half-baked, poets.

The modern poet is having his pulse on the events of the epoch, and not those of a tribe which beyond seasonal feasts may not have sufficient business in life.

Mr. Cope has mistaken the African poet's genuine desire to merge himself, in the mother tongue, in the greater sea of world culture. People who advocate the so-called separate development—at any rate an impossibility—of races can insist on the so-called purely Bantu poetry, which can only exist in the dwarfed minds of the swollen-headed hobgoblins.

Mr. Cope has made a mess of the praise poem of Chief Masopha, one of the most popular pieces in Basutoland. (These pieces are learnt as a matter of fun in Basutoland schools, without sufficient consciousness as to their significance, both artistic and historical.) He calls it *The Boast of Masopha*. That is, according to him, Masopha is boastful! Heroic poetry is a boast, at the best a rigmarole, says Mr. Cope! He has omitted some brilliant passages in translating the heroic piece of this

Gate-crasher of guarded gates,
Guarded by Chere's Bushmen, cheap as dust.
These millions milled in thro' chance gates,
Milled in thro' inroads fit for women,
Milled in amidst cries of push-me-up!

Thus Mr. Cope, in dealing with Bantu oral poetic tradition, has not exercised sufficient care in breaking down the language barrier. His theory of the imitation of European models is not convincing. Those interested in things African will have to work more and more with competent Africans who are able to puzzle out those nuances of language and shades of thought that make up so much of their poetic wealth. Any paternalistic approach and domineering attitude are bound to failure.

The author of the article has not been blind to Mr. Cope's initiative and interest in Bantu oral poetic tradition. His pioneering effort is a challenge to the capable and well-informed Africans to shake off the dewdrops from their heavy eyes, and face up to the morning sun breaking over the new horizon. Our well-meaning European friends have had the day. It is high time for the African, with the smell of cow-dung still fresh under his soles, to spell out the magic of the glory gone by, never to return.

Bantu oral poetic tradition plunges totally into that stream of

hitherto neglected treasure-trove of oral literature which the Oxford printers have handled with self-effacing glee: *Oxford Library of African Literature*. That Library must find its rightful place in one of the teeming cities of turbulent Africa. It is conspicuously out of place. A grand idea for Mr. Cope and others!

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AFRICA

Notes on Current Events

NIGERIA A number of leading Nigerian politicians, including the federal Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and other members of the Federal Cabinet, as well as several regional Premiers, lost their lives in a military *coup d'état*, in January. Although the movement was initiated by a group of younger officers, headed by Major Nzeogwu, control has been assumed by the Chief of Staff, Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi. He has announced himself as head of a new military government ; all governments of the Regions of the Federation have been dismissed and replaced by military governors. The new government announced it had no plans for nationalizing industries.

The *coup* follows continuing and widespread disturbances following the October elections in Western Nigeria, marked by terrorism, assassinations and ballot-rigging on a scale even wider than in the previous general election.

Commenting on the position on the eve of these events, Mr. Wahab Goodluck, the President of the Nigerian Trade Union Congress, addressing its second Convention in December, said: 'the world is witnessing the funeral obsequies of Parliamentary democracy being staged by the Nigerian National Democratic Party' (*Advance*, Lagos, December 1965).

The Nigerian military take-over followed a number of army putsches in African countries—Algeria, Congo, Central African Republic, and Dahomey.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC It was reported on January 1st from Bangui that former president David Dacko's government was overthrown by a pre-dawn army *coup*. Colonel Bedel Bokassa, Chief of Staff, announced that talks were taking place on the formation of a new government. He said all political

prisoners were being released. It was reported that Mr. Dacko was under house arrest and Mr. Michel Adama Tamboux, president of the National Assembly, was missing.

Le Monde, semi-official French Government paper, welcomed the military take-overs in former French colonies, and commended their action in breaking off diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China.

CONGO (Leopoldville) After a tussle for power between former President Kasavubu and former Prime Minister Mr. Tshombe, General Joseph Mobuto seized the reins of government in the Congo in a bloodless *coup,* and announced himself President for a period of five years. He names his Chief-of-Staff, Col. Leonard Mulamba, Premier, and said that they and other officers would continue to run the army and also assume civilian duties. In a communique, giving reasons for the *coup,* General Mobutu blamed 'the race for power between politicians for the complete failure in political matters'.

Premier Mulamba has chosen a cabinet which is representative of the supporters Convention Nationale Congolaise (CONACO) led by Mr. Tshombe and the Front Démocratique Congolaise (F.D.C.) of Mr. Kasavubu.

While General Mobuto claimed that Mr. Antoine Gizenga, former Deputy Premier under the murdered Premier Patrice Lumumba, was being freed from imprisonment, the role of the General in bringing about the downfall of beloved Patrice, has not been forgotten.

Meanwhile, Mr. Spaak, the Belgian Foreign Minister, has described the new Congolese leaders as 'old friends', and in expressing the hope that the Congo would embark on a 'programme of reconstruction', indicated 'that Belgian technical assistance would probably be increased during the coming months'.

CONGO (Brazzaville) Education was nationalized in October. Owing to the shortage of school accommodation, students and parents are co-operating in the building of a number of school buildings and class rooms. Young people are sacrificing free time to volunteer for new building projects. Many new roads, bridges and clinics have also been built as a result of the 'roll-up-your-sleeves' campaign.

GHANA Ghana, the world's biggest exporter of cocoa, now makes its own chocolates, and the first Ghanaian-made chocolate has appeared in the shops of Ghana. In the past Ghana was required to import all cocoa products from abroad. More and more factories are being established for the processing of cocoa beans and according to *Solidarity*, 'A huge combine, able to process 200 tons of cocoa beans per hour into chocolate, oil and beverages, is now being completed at the port of Tema, Ghana's new industrial centre'.

The construction of a science city, about ten miles from Accra, has also been started. The city will have a central building to be named 'Palace of Science' and fifteen scientific research institutes. It will be the centre of scientific and research work for Ghanaian scientists.

ZANZIBAR The Island's first cold storage plant has been opened by the First Vice-President, Sheikh Abeid Karume. The sea around Zanzibar abounds in fish but the fishing industry was never encouraged under British rule. After the revolution in 1964, the government took over the Fisheries Development Company which has since been expanded, and this storage installation is part of this development.

Figures indicate that the tourist trade is once again on the increase in Zanzibar, but without the once famous rickshaw. This is what Sheikh Karume said of the rickshaw: 'It is wrong for citizens of a free country to ride about using other men as beasts of burden'. The rickshaw men have been compensated and the only rickshaw to be found on the island these days is in the museum.

SUDAN The Communist Party of the Sudan, which played the vanguard role in the overthrow of the Abboud military dictatorship, has been outlawed. Their eleven members in the Constituent Assembly have been unseated and the Party newspaper *Al Meudan* —the most popular in the country—seized.

Since the law was pushed through the Assembly on November 15th there have been a series of demonstrations by trade unions, student organizations and others supporting the Communist Party's right to legal existence. The Communist Party has declared that the ban was unconstitutional and would not be recognized. The Party's General Secretary, Abdul Halek Madjub, stated that

imperialist influence was behind the decisions taken by the Umma and National Unionist Parties to attack the Communist Party. He called on all democrats and anti-imperialists to protest and rally in defence of democracy.

MOROCCO It is feared that Ahmed Ben Barka, leader of the democratic opposition in Morocco, has been murdered following his kidnapping in Paris by agents of the Moroccan Minister of the Interior, General Mohammed Oufkir, with the connivance of prominent members of the French security police. The scandalous crime has created a crisis not only in Morocco but also in France. The French government has demanded that Oufkir be extradited to France to stand trial for his part in the proceedings; but although failure to comply would result in serious damage to French-Moroccan relations, until now very close, King Hassan does not appear to be in a position to carry out this request. In France, the incident has sparked off widespread public demands for enquiry into the French political police and spy network, which seem to be a law unto themselves. The French Cabinet admitted that the kidnapping was carried out with the 'complicity of the French secret services or police officials'. M. Mitterand, Left candidate for the recent Presidential elections who shocked De Gaulle by winning more than a third of the total vote, has demanded a full public explanation.

Ben Barka was chairman of the preparatory committee for the African-Asian-Latin American tri-continent conference in Cuba, which was meeting when these notes were being written.

MOZAMBIQUE According to Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, President of *Frelimo,* his organization plans to move its headquarters from Dar-es-Salaam to Mozambique, once they had consolidated and made an area safe. He disclosed this at a press conference at Dar-es-Salaam, when he also gladdened the hearts of all freedom lovers with the news that 'large areas' were now under the control of *Frelimo* freedom fighters.

During October, the second conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies (CONCP) took place in Dar-es-Salaam, for the second time in five years. Organizations which participated are: Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (M.P.L.A.), the African Party for the independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde

(PAIGC), and the Liberation Committee of S. Tome and Principe (CLSTP). They were all represented by their top leaders. With a war waging in Mozambique, Guinea and Angola, against a common enemy, closer co-operation was essential. The purpose was therefore to establish co-operation based on common principles. An editorial in *Revolution*—organ of FRELIMO—states that the conference 'revealed an almost absolute community of viewpoints among the member organizations of CONCP, concerning the fundamental aspects of the revolutions which are taking place in our countries'. In conclusion it said, 'Talks, in fact, are useful only to the extent that they are the prelude to action. The conference established adequate forms of co-operation among our movements, namely in the political and military fields, and in the field of national reconstruction. It is necessary to implement this co-operation'.

At a meeting in Accra, during the O.A.U. Conference, the heads of the four movements met 'in order to put into *immediate operation* the system of political and military co-operation'.

BOOK REVIEWS

Diagnosis on Neo-Colonialism

> It is necessary constantly to explain and expose among the broadest masses of the toilers of all countries, and particularly the backward countries, the deception systematically practised by the imperialists in creating, under the guise of politically independent states, states, which are wholly dependent upon them economically, financially and militarily.
>
> (LENIN, *Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Question*, June 1920.)

THE LATEST WORK BY KWAME NKRUMAH, President of Ghana, places a powerful weapon in the hands of all freedom fighters in Africa and indeed in the world. Here is a thorough diagnosis of neo-colonialism seen through the eyes of an African statesman at the helm of the ship of state. Thus not only the theoretical aspects of neo-colonialism but its practice are revealed by one eminently qualified to do so.

A very impressive array of data regarding the tactics of imperialism in Africa is supplied. Cutting through the jungle of imperialist statistics which more often than not are designed to conceal rather than inform, Nkrumah demonstrates how the fabulous wealth and resources of Africa are being systematically sucked out of the continent. He identifies the financial, banking, industrial and mining concerns that participate in the exploitation of our continent and the guilty men who control them. These powerful international interests conspire to keep the African countries as backward producers of raw materials for the sake of maintaining their vast loot. They control the marketing of these primary products in the world and themselves fix prices. Thus the developing countries find the prices of their products declining whilst the prices of finished or manufactured goods goes up. When any country endeavours to break out of the vicious circle and takes measures to lay the foundations of a modern industrial economy plots are organised by the imperialists to overthrow the government and replace it by one amenable to neo-colonialist interests.

Nkrumah picks a few innocent looking headlines from the columns of staid financial newspapers and shows the ugly reality of further aggregation and control of wealth by a few which characterizes imperialist monopoly.

To cover up their nefarious activities the imperialists have developed a formidable armoury of ideological weapons and organizations to foster them. Such movements as the United States Peace Corps, I.C.F.T.U., M.R.A., various religious sects and the U.S. Information Service pour out an unending stream of propaganda aimed at sowing division, confusion and corruption. Their most potent weapon is that of anti-communism. Nkrumah explains how this arises from the fact that the Great October Socialist Revolution represented a devastating blow against capitalism. Furthermore another crushing defeat was the establishment of socialist states in Europe and Asia, in particular in China.

Nkrumah, whose passionate advocacy of pan-African unity has already assured him an honoured place in African history, shows how the balkanization of Africa helps the imperialists. He places before the African peoples the goal of uniting the continent, controlling its resources and giving its peoples the standard of living they deserve.

The imperialists do not rely only on economic and financial control of the African countries. Behind these interests stand the huge military machines and Intelligence services of the United States and its allies.

All this has of course been said before. But the merit of this work is that Kwame brings into focus numerous strands of neo-colonialism in practice within the confines of a single book. Here we see the tactics of imperialism at work in Africa and other developing countries.

This is such a good book that it might seem almost uncharitable to raise some questions which it inevitably poses at this stage. But we feel that for the sake of clarity it ought to be said that in this work it is not the *essence* of imperialism or its base that we have to do with. Nkrumah deals with neo-colonialism to a great extent as a problem of relationships between governments of independent African states on the one hand and the giant monopolies on the other. Hence his answer to neo-colonialism is the establishment of a united government in Africa. He does agree that the defeat of neo-colonialism is an essential condition for African unity but then leaves the question at that point. The fact that neo-colonialism is an aspect of the class struggle within nations and on a world scale

is not given more than a sentence or two in the whole work. Yet it is the issue dominating the world scene, and Africa as well.

It is in this light that some doubt will inevitably be cast on the title of the book which might give the impression that in neo-colonialism we are dealing with a stage—a development under new conditions of the capitalist economy.

When Lenin wrote his classic work on imperialism he described capitalism . . . developing, expanding and conquering the world. He dealt with the essential character of capitalism in its imperialist stage. Even the practice of neo-colonialism was foreshadowed and dealt with by Lenin.

Neo-colonialism is imperialism in retreat. It is a form of defence not only against the young national states struggling to an independent modern economy but even more against the alternative to capitalism, namely, socialism. Neo-colonialism is one of the forms of imperialist exploitation previously practised against the 'independent' states in Africa, Asia, Latin America and even Europe itself. It is now being applied to the vastly more numerous states which have ceased to be colonies but are still tied by a thousand and one strands to the imperialist states economically. It is the West's answer to the powerful attractive force of socialism on the peoples of the world who are not prepared to go through all the experiences of capitalism before getting the good life.

The World Socialist System stands as a working model and vast laboratory of the economic formation that is to replace capitalism all over the world. We live in the era of transition from capitalism to socialism. The national liberation movement, which is a component part of the proletarian revolution, has achieved great victories with the result that scores of independent states have arisen in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Powerful working-class movements in the citadels of imperialism challenge the rule of the monopolies. The balance of world forces has shifted in favour of the peoples fighting for socialism, democracy, independence and peace.

It is for this reason that all manner of fancy ideas have been spread by the imperialists to isolate Africa and other developing continents from socialism. According to the imperialists the African people have no right to choose socialism and communism as their way of life. Apparently we are not free to elect under which system we wish to live. Some and maybe all of the African people might desire to take the Bolshevik path charted by Lenin. If so, why not?

If independence means anything it must include the absolute right to make any choice we like for our continent.

Kwame Nkrumah rightly dedicates this book to the freedom fighters of Africa, living and dead. A noticeable omission in the book is any reference to the fact that the labouring classes— the factory workers, miners and farmers—produce the wealth which is filched from Africa. That the wealth of Africa belongs not to governments but to them—to the people, to the working classes. The people want the commanding heights of the economy taken out of the hands of the imperialists without compensation and used for their benefit. When the African people are strong enough to do that in each country they may then find the strength to unite the whole continent.

In other words this book cries out aloud for a sequel.

In the meantime it is to be hoped that an edition cheaper than 42 shillings will be made available soon for mass circulation.

A. ZANZOLO

Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism
by Kwame Nkrumah. Nelson. 42s.

Egypt and Socialism

THIS YEAR MARKS the tenth anniversary of the joint British-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt. Four years before this invasion the victorious national revolution of July 1952, had put an end to the corrupt Farouk monarchy. This opened out a new page in Egypt's history, but apart from becoming a Republic did not seem to make any basic changes.

Egypt's backward economy and low living standards remained; the tiny land reforms made little or no difference to the mass of the fellaheen (peasants), or to the rich landlords. There was no real advance towards a genuinely democratic system, and hundreds of Communists and their supporters were thrown into prison without trial, just as they had been under the King.

From this standpoint, the defeat of the 1956 invasion was a greater spur to the building of a new Egypt than the events of July 1952—though the march of events following 1956 would not have been possible without the 1952 revolution.

Until 1956 the imperialists were still hopeful of bringing President Nasser under their influence. Their hopes changed after the nationaliza-

tion of the Suez Canal. There was an abrupt withdrawal of U.S. and British loans for the Aswan Dam project, so Nasser turned instead to the Soviet Union and accepted their offer to build the Dam.

The defeat of the Suez invasion and acceptance of Soviet aid to build the Dam was the real turning point in Egypt. For the next five years things began to change in a big way. At times the pace was rather unsteady, with still an absence of an internal democratic system, but there could no longer be any doubt that the new Egypt was unalterably opposed to imperialism, and determined to hew out its own path of economic advance and create a new society.

From the standpoint of the struggle against imperialism, Egypt is one of the vanguard countries. It provides a haven of refuge for leaders of the African liberation movements who have been exiled, and is a bridge between Africa and Asia in providing links for the Afro-Asian Solidarity movement.

This exciting tale is well told in a recent book* by Peter Mansfield, who has spent more than ten years in the Arab countries of the Middle East—at first in the British Foreign Service, from which he resigned after the Suez invasion, and at present as a journalist working as Middle East correspondent for the *Sunday Times* in Cairo.

Mr. Mansfield is well primed on the big changes which have taken place in Egypt during the past decade, and expresses approval for the gigantic steps which have been taken to build the new Egypt. The book has an extremely absorbing account of the land reforms, the measures of nationalization carried out, the big advances taken towards achieving an internal democratic system, the raising of living standards, and the transformation in the raising of the level of health and education.

However, one would have wished for a fuller account of the way in which the Arab Socialist Union functions, to what extent there is freedom of political activity, and the kind of democratic problems involved in the operation of a one-party system. The release of the Communists from prison in May 1964 is only mentioned briefly, and there is no mention of their positive activity since their release in raising the level of political consciousness within the Arab Socialist Union, to combat the remnants of anti-Communism, and to advance more rapidly on the socialist path.

Though the author is sympathetic to the measures which have been taken to build the new Egypt, it is obviously too much to expect him to give the Egyptian Communists any credit for the long and courageous struggle they have waged during all these years to bring about these changes. Their release was conditional upon the dissolution of the

* NASSER'S EGYPT by Peter Mansfield, Penguin African Library, 4s. 6d.

Communist Party, and in the circumstances they seem to have had no option but to comply, but they are now equally active as individuals within the Arab Socialist Union in pushing forward the advance to socialism.

As for the big changes which have taken place, the author gives an impressive account of the new schemes concerning land ownership, the large-scale nationalization, the big improvements in the conditions of workers and peasants, in health measures and facilities for education.

It is true that land reform has so far only affected a small minority of the peasants. After the 1952 revolution maximum land ownership was limited to 200 feddans (a feddan = 1.038 acres), and affected only 10 per cent of the area. In 1961 the maximum limit was reduced to 100 feddans, but still left loopholes for a few rich landowners. All the gigantic estates have vanished, but those with between 20 and 100 feddans can still be ranked as owned by the upper middle class, and even those with only 20 feddans are well above the average.

In practice, land reform has given benefit to only 8 per cent of the peasants, but the completion of the Aswan Dam will provide for the reclamation of over a million more feddans in Upper Egypt, and on the fringes of the Delta. Until now the agricultural labourers and casual workers have derived little benefit, but they are at least assured of a minimum of three shillings a day. This is a small amount, but is far higher than they had ever before received.

It is the big capitalists who have suffered the biggest blows. Between October 1961 and February 1962, the government confiscated the property of 600 of the wealthiest Egyptian families. In August 1963, further national measures took over 300 big industrial concerns, including foreign monopolies like Lever Brothers.

The number of workers doubled in the decade between 1953 and 1963 to 724,000, but wages are still low, ranging from £30-£35 a month for unskilled workers, and £60-£70 a month for skilled workers—but these are only a small minority of the labour force in Egypt. At the same time, it is a great advance for Egyptian workers, who used to work twelve hours a day, to have a legal maximum of seven hours and a forty-two-hour week.

Even more impressive is the big advance in health centres in the rural areas; the ending of the inferior position of women; the setting up of facilities for educating girls, and the amazing overall transformation in education. Of the 2,500 new rural health units planned for the five years 1963-1968, 800 have already been opened, together with 168 comprehensive treatment units and 275 combined units. In 1951 the school population was less than two million. Today it is approaching

four million, and university students increased during the same period from 38,000 to 53,000.

In 1964 the education budget was £90 million—more than double that for 1951. There are now school places for about 80 per cent of the children up to six years of age. Primary education from the age of six to twelve is free, and compulsory by law, but school attendance is higher at 85 per cent in the towns, than in the villages—60 per cent—where children still work in the cotton fields.

While appreciating these great advances it would still be foolish to imagine that low living standards and conditions no longer exist. There is still a long way to go before the wealth of the country is adequately expressed in better living standards and social services. But there can be no doubt that conditions are already far above those of most of the African states, and likely to grow further in the coming years.

What does not appear so favourable is the kind of democratic structure existing in Egypt. The 1962 National Charter put forward these basic principles:

'FIRST. Political democracy cannot be separated from social democracy. No citizen can be regarded as free to vote unless he is given the following three guarantees:

(i) he should be free from exploitation in all its forms;

(ii) he should have an equal opportunity with his fellow citizen to enjoy a fair share of the national wealth;

(iii) his mind should be free from all anxiety likely to undermine his future security.

SECOND. Political democracy cannot exist under the domination of any one class. Democracy means literally, the domination and sovereignty of the people—the whole people.' [National Charter (Chapter 5)]

The opposition to 'the domination of any one class' is a familiar formulation for one-party systems in Africa. But it must be borne in mind that the guarantees extended by the National Charter certainly did not apply to Communists and their supporters, who were still in prison two years after the adoption of the Charter. Since that time President Nasser has made a big political advance, dropping the term 'Arab Socialism', and now expounding the view that 'scientific socialism' is the only way forward for Egypt.

Even more important is President Nasser's recent emphasis that the leading position in a socialist society must belong to the working class, and that within the Arab Socialist Union there must be a conscious

political vanguard which will direct revolutionary action as a whole. It is within this context that Communists in Egypt can assist in carrying forward the struggle to achieve socialism.

IDRIS COX.

The Situation in Rhodesia

Statement issued by the Executive Committee of the African National Congress of South Africa

THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS of South Africa views with deep concern and indignation the extremely grave implications to the people of Zimbabwe, of Southern Africa, the independent states of Africa and indeed the whole anti-racialist and anti-fascist forces of the world caused by the situation which is now prevailing in Rhodesia.

In the past the African National Congress has warned the world over and over again that white domination and fascism persists and is planning to entrench itself in Zimbabwe no less than it has done in South Africa, Mozambique, and South West Africa. We have often posed the question, what makes it possible that in a world in which the overwhelming majority of the people are opposed to racialism and colonialism such a situation could continue to exist in Southern Africa. We have suggested that it would be important to examine those who are shielding this obnoxious system from its complete destruction.

It was and still is our view that the policies and practices of those who benefit materially from the exploitation and oppression of the African people in Southern Africa constitute a barricade against the freedom of the African people.

We do not think that it is necessary for us to go into lengthy details to support our views because these have already been submitted to *The Special Committee on the situation with regard to Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,* in the form of a Petition submitted in Dar-es-Salaam on June 9th, 1965. The Honourable

Committee in its report reproduced our Petition *in extenso* and it now forms part of the documents of the United Nations Organization.

Unholy Alliance

Apart from that Petition, in numerous speeches and declarations we have warned of the grave dangers which might face both the peoples of Southern Africa, of Africa and indeed the whole world unless this sinister Unholy Alliance between Verwoerd, Salazar, and Smith was smashed.

In this statement we merely want to emphasize a few points which we have made before about this Unholy Alliance. We have alleged and still allege that the Unholy Alliance of Verwoerd, Smith and Salazar was fundamentally based on a common ideology—racialism and fascism; a common economic objective—the ruthless exploitation and oppression of the African people; a common military design—the defence of colonialism, fascism, white domination and the subversion of the independent states.

This white minority fascist triumvirate in Southern Africa is a bulwark and bastion of colonialism and imperialism in Africa and a springboard from which the imperialist powers are plotting to reverse all that the African Revolution has gained.

It is an irony that only twenty-three years have elapsed since the sons and daughters of Britain, France, Belgium, Asia and Africa were called upon to rally and to give their lives in the most unprecedented war and loss of life to destroy the menacing and powerful fascist regime of Hitler and Mussolini in Europe. Today, some of these very powers are either assisting openly or clandestinely, conniving or directly supporting the very growth of a similar fascist regime in Southern Africa. It is legitimate to ask whether these white powers do so today because Hitler's Aryanism was against one white group as against another, and whether their indifference today is because it is white racialism against the black people. Or is it because economic benefits from the exploitation of the African takes first place to the morality, justice and human rights in the whole consortium of the Western Imperialist Powers, who have a stake in the maintenance of the bastion of imperialism and exploitation in Southern Africa?

Western Powers

It is our view that the main criminals who must be put in the dock in the present situation in Southern Africa are the main pillars of colonialism and fascism in Southern Africa. We have alleged before

that there is in fact a more powerful and unholy alliance whose members are primarily Britain, the United States of America, France, Belgium and Japan. It is these powers who have a huge share and stake in the continued oppression and exploitation of the people. It is these very powers who continue to give an extended lease of life to a wicked system which has been so vehemently condemned by the peoples of the world. Their black record of sabotaging all efforts made to end Dr. Verwoerd's apartheid in South Africa and South West Africa ; Salazar's fascism in Mozambique and Angola ; and Smith's arrogant usurpation of power and the continued oppression of the people of Rhodesia must and will remain an eternal indictment against them.

Britain's own acts before, during and after Smith's Declaration of Independence constitute an act of treachery which the African people and all other right-thinking people will never forget.

It is indeed not the first time that the British Government has betrayed the rights of the African people in the interests of a white minority and also in the interests of her economic stake in the country. The situation of the African people in South Africa today is a classical example of British betrayal. The people of Zimbabwe in many respects are beginning to suffer what the South African African people have been suffering for over fifty years.

For very many years now Britain has been claiming that the United Nations Organization had no jurisdiction whatsoever over the situation in Rhodesia. And that Rhodesia was the sole responsibility of the British Government which was competent and able to solve the situation. It might be recalled that over several years when the South African situation was also raised in the United Nations, Britain also emphatically excluded the jurisdiction of the United Nations over that issue claiming that it was purely a domestic issue.

Sanctions

For a number of years too, the African people of South Africa demanded that if a very serious blood bath had to be avoided in South Africa the world should impose economic and diplomatic sanctions on South Africa. One of the greatest opponents to this suggestion and as far as we know up to date was the British Government itself.

It is the height of duplicity having regard to the foregoing attitude of Britain in the past that she should now be the first to appeal to the Security Council for assistance in the European situa-

tion, and not only that but to appeal for sanctions which she has for years denounced as ineffectual.

It is our view that if the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization agree to enforce sanctions against Rhodesia, a member of the Unholy Alliance, this today can be effective only if it is applied to the other members of this Unholy Alliance, Portugal and South Africa, who are guilty of the same crimes against both the Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United Nations. Any other decision would be impotent and farcical and would merely permit Britain which has such a large stake in the economy of South Africa and Rhodesia to continue to reap economic benefits.

We, however, have never believed that economic sanctions alone can bring the white racialists and fascists to their knees. They rule and intend to rule the majority of the people with the baton and the gun; to crush them they must be ruined economically and defeated militarily.

The fact that Britain has not seen fit to intervene militarily in the Rhodesian situation remains a complete mystery to those who know how ruthlessly the British Government has dealt with mutiny, rebellion and treachery in any other colony. It is needless to cite examples which have already been referred to like Malaya, Aden, Cyprus, etc., etc. One can only presume that where British interests can be protected by a white minority government, they are even prepared to swallow rebellion and to leave the Governor-General, the Representative of the Crown, unprotected.

Unless the boundaries of white racialism and fascism are to extend, the grave situation which exists today requires the mighty and concerted efforts of the people of Southern Africa, the people of Africa and indeed the whole world. The time to act is NOW, tomorrow may be too late.

D. NOKWE,
SECRETARY-GENERAL.

Communists and the Truth by Govan Mbeki

GOVAN MBEKI, MEMBER of the South African Communist Party and of the African National Congress, was brought from his cell at Robben Island where he is serving a life sentence as one of the 'Rivonia' trialists, to appear in a Durban courtroom last November. He was a

defence witness at the trial of Harold Strachan, former political prisoner, whose revelations of abominable jail conditions caused a furore. Strachan is now being prosecuted for causing 'false information' about jail conditions to be published in the *Rand Daily Mail*. The prosecutor, Combrink tried to shake Mbeki's evidence by suggesting that he had no regard for the truth. Govan Mbeki's evidence —the whole of which was an inspiring example of a revolutionary of unbroken spirit—was more than a match for Combrink. We reprint some brief extracts of the cross-examination.

Combrink: For several years before it was banned you were a local editor of the newspaper *New Age*? Mbeki: *Yes.*

You are aware of the power and extent of a press report?—*Yes.*

If you had the opportunity of publishing half truths to serve your political ends would you have done so?—*I would never have published untruths.*

Would you have tested every bit of information for truth?—*I would have.*

Are you saying that everything published under your supervision was the truth?—*As far as I am aware.*

You, who would not shirk bloodshed to attain your political ends, would not print a half truth or lie in your newspaper?—*I wouldn't print an untruth. There is no relation between telling a lie and bloodshed. Men who conduct wars do not do so because they have abandoned the principle of truth.*

Then you would rather kill a man than lie to him?—*If the killing is in the process of conducting a war.*

And a lie in the process of conducting a war?—*It is necessary to kill sometimes to weaken the enemy. A lie can boomerang. If it is discovered you would lose the support of your people. There is nothing to be gained from telling lies.*

Do you still feel as ardently about your political beliefs as before you were jailed?—*Yes.*

You say you are prepared to sacrifice human life to achieve political ends, but for the sake of the truth you are prepared to see your friends suffer in prison? *They are suffering in prison now for the truth.*

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